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LD2802141189 [Editorial Report]

Israel

Jerusalem radio announced 28 February that its newsroom was contacted by an anonymous caller who threatened that his organization will execute kidnapped IDF soldier Avi Sasportas unless the authorities release 1,500 Palestinian prisoners. An unidentified caller had earlier told the AFP bureau in Jerusalem that Sasportas is being held by the "Palestinian Arab Army," an organization which he said is not connected with the PLO, according to the radio. Jerusalem television said the PLO leadership has opposed suggestions to kidnap Israeli soldiers on the grounds that Palestinian activists in the territories do not have secure hiding places.

Meanwhile, a Palestinian was killed during clashes with Israeli soldiers in a village near Ramallah, Jerusalem radio noted. IDF radio announced that inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be prevented from crossing to or from Israel on 28 February because of the local elections.

On the Palestinian side, the leadership of the intifadah (uprising) issued Call No 35 which called on Jerusalem Arabs to boycott the municipal elections in the city and outlined a program of further protest action until 15 March. The call, broadcast by Sanaa Voice of Palestine radio, also expressed support for meetings with Israeli forces which "acknowledge" Palestinian rights and oppose the occupation, adding that the recent meetings in Jerusalem's Notre Dame Hotel were in accordance with this basis.

Lebanon

Israeli Raid—Israeli air force planes attacked a DFLP headquarters southeast of Beirut 28 February, destroying all their targets, an Israeli military spokesman announced in a statement broadcast by IDF radio. The target was a base used by groups involved in attempts to carry out raids in the security zone and in Israel.

A Palestinian source cited by the Voice of National Resistance radio stated that six Israeli planes carried out four air raids against positions in the hills near Shimlan, Baysur, and 'Aynab. "Concussion" bombs and rockets were used against civilian buildings, he said, adding that several injured people were taken to hospitals while other victims remain under the rubble. The raid followed attacks on the South Lebanese Army (SLA) the previous day in which two SLA men and one "terrorist" were killed, according to IDF radio.

East Beirut—After meeting with Prime Minister General Michel 'Awn, Lebanese Forces (LF) commander Samir Ja'ja' voiced support for proposals to give priority to holding presidential elections, the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon reported. Ja'ja' dismissed proposals to link elections with reforms, describing the call for reforms as an "impossible" demand made by those who do not want elections.

PLO Affairs

Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's recent talks with Israeli and PLO delegations in Cairo were "in essence" indirect Israeli-Palestinian talks with Soviet mediation, PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat contended in an interview with Budapest television. He viewed this as the beginning of an "extremely important step in the new diplomatic opening which the Soviet Union is now directing." However, 'Arafat stressed that an international conference must take place this year: otherwise, there will be an "international crisis" and a move away from peace. He also emphasized that the PLO's acceptance of a two-state solution to the Palestine problem is a strategy, not a tactic.

Iran

Ultimatum to Britain—The Council of Guardians approved a Majlis bill which states that Iran will break all diplomatic ties with Britain unless the latter reconsiders its stand on "The Satanic Verses" within 1 week, IRNA reported 28 February. Nearly all 201 deputies attending the Majlis session had earlier voted in favor of the bill, which urges Britain to declare its opposition to "unprincipled" stands and to the contents of the book. Majlis Speaker 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani and Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati were among those who expressed support for the bill, IRNA noted.

Shevardnadze Visit—At a meeting with Rafsanjani before returning to Moscow, Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze said the most important event of his visit was the meeting with Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni, noting that the Soviets believe relations with Iran have been "transformed," according to IRNA. The agency reported that Shevardnadze held two more rounds of talks with Velayati before his departure: the topics discussed included Afghanistan and the Iran-Iraq negotiations. The two sides also signed political and cultural agreements that provide for a regular exchange of delegations, Tehran television disclosed.

Islamic Organization on Rushdie Affair

The secretary general of the Islamic World League issued a statement in Mecca announcing that the Islamic Conference Organization will pursue "penal legal action" against the author and publishers of "The Satanic Verses" in "competent courts," SPA reported. Without mentioning Ayatollah Khomeyni's death threat against Salman Rushdie, the official said the book is "repugnant" in its "lies" about the Prophet Muhammad and its "scandalous" infringement of Islamic sanctities are "crimes."

Afghanistan

Situation in Kabul—Some of the security restrictions imposed in Kabul under the state of emergency are being lifted, and tanks and APC's at key intersections have been removed, BBC radio reported in its World Service. The Red Cross has decided to return some of the personnel evacuated prior to the Soviet withdrawal although "severe shortages of supplies" continue, the radio added.

The Senate reviewed the state of emergency decree and the setting up of the Supreme Defense Council, BAKHTAR reported, and agreed to set up a commission to prepare a declaration on the state of emergency. The senators also criticized the formation of the mujahidin interim government as "gross interference" in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

Mujahidin Leaders' Statements—Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, leader of the Hezb-e Eslami group, claimed at a news conference in Peshawar that the mujahidin now control 95 percent of the territory in Afghanistan and that the interim government will be transferred inside the country "within a month," Islamabad radio reported.

Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, prime minister of the interim government, declared that the most important task facing the government after "liberation" is to found a "stable" Islamic society, according to remarks made in an interview with Abu Dhabi's AL-ITTIHAD newspaper. He said he does not expect confrontation with external forces but there will be "secret conspiracies and plots" against his government. Turning to relations with the Soviet Union, Sayyaf maintained that there can be "relations of neighborliness" provided they are "within the framework allowed by Islam."

Sudan

Military/Political Situation—Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi declared in the Constituent Assembly that he will resign 5 March unless the army assures him it is "committed to constitutional legitimacy," SUNA reported. Meanwhile, the Army leadership confirmed at a meeting in Khartoum that it is not aiming at "overthrowing the political system," and that it will delay a final decision on Al-Mahdi's response to its memorandum, the agency added.

In another development, shots were fired at State Council Chairman Ahmad al-Mirghani's home 27 February, SUNA reported. Four suspects have been arrested and investigation of the incident has begun. The Military High Command remains alert to prevent a "show of force" by supporters of the prime minister and militants of the National Islamic Front, according to AFP citing diplomatic sources.

Sudan has asked Egypt for urgent supplies of military equipment and experts, according to sources in Cairo cited by Beirut's AL-SAFIR newspaper. The sources added that Egyptian President Husni Mubarak has instructed his officials to take swift action "to prevent foreign intervention" in Sudan.

Southern Military Situation—The southern city of Torit was captured by SPLA forces 26 February and "remnants" of the military garrison have fled, the clandestine SPLA radio reported. The commander of the SPLA forces which captured Torit issued warnings to government garrisons around the city to "join the SPLA or evacuate" their positions.

Gulf Affairs

ACC-GCC Relations—Shaykh 'Isa ibn Salman Al Khalifah, amir of Bahrain and chairman of the GCC, received a message from his Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) counterpart, Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, calling for "strong relations of cooperation" between the two organizations, WAKH reported.

Kuwait—Kuwait's information minister denied that any "senior official" is behind the "secret" petitions circulating in Kuwait calling for the restoration of parliament, AFP reported. According to the Saudi AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT newspaper cited by the agency, "several former deputies" are behind the petition.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League's Maqsud Views U.S. Mideast Policy

PM2702115689 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 21 Feb 89 p 3

[Interview with Arab League UN Representative Dr Clovis Maqsud by Muhammad Sadiq in Washington; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Sadiq] How do you view the six-member committee's meetings in Kuwait and what is expected from them?

[Maqsud] The six-member committee's meeting in Kuwait reflects the Arab League's awareness that the restoration of Lebanese unity is a major guarantee of the safety of the course of Arab solidarity and accord. Recent bloody incidents in the eastern area of Beirut and the the bloody incidents that occurred near Beirut a few weeks earlier prove that the Arab and Lebanese need to settle the Lebanese issue according to the interests and feelings of the overwhelming majority, representing all Lebanese groups, areas, and sectors. The Lebanese people also realize that the infighting is useless and futile and must stop, because its continuation is bound to exhaust the credibility of joint Arab action and weaken its effectiveness at all levels. This is why the six-member committee is convening. Pan-Arab interests correspond fully with Lebanon's national interests. The spiritual leaders' collective participation is perhaps an indication of the clergy's rejection of what is happening in Lebanon.

As for international mobilization, we must secure a U.S. commitment to implemention of the Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon, since the U.S. Administration contributed to drawing up Security Council Resolutions 425, 508, and 509. It must convey its commitment to these resolutions as enthusiastically as it did to the need to implement Resolution 242.

[Sadiq] What stage has been reached in Arab-U.S. efforts to achieve these objectives?

[Maqsud] On several occasions the State Department has emphasized to us its support for Arab League efforts and steps to end the Lebanese crisis. While welcoming that support, we emphasize that it cannot be effective or fruitful without serious U.S. action to eliminate the Israeli occupation from South Lebanon. The U.S. Administration must understand that the desired Lebanese solution would not last if Israel continued to occupy the South and control its fate, using its occupation to kindle the fire of unrest and instability.

[Sadiq] Several senior officials in the new U.S. Administration have said that for a month now the administration has begun to reexamine its foreign policy and determine priority issues. In your view, where do the Middle East issues fit in the new administration's set of priorities?

[Maqsud] The major states like the United States and the Soviet Union have begun to understand the limits of their power and influence. For instance, the United States has backtracked, albeit only relatively, from its support for the rebels in Nicaragua, under moral and political pressure from Central American states. The Soviet Union too has withdrawn from Afghanistan and abandoned the forces which it imposed as a result of its occupation of Afghanistan.

This recent development opens the way to the indigenous forces of the world's peoples—in the Arab world, the Islamic world, the Third World states, and even East and West European states—to revive the trend of autonomy from the shackles of dependence on the two major states, and enables us to deal with them on the basis of mutual respect and interests.

[Sadiq] How can this be applied to Middle East issues, especially the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict?

[Maqsud] We have discovered that the less tension that exists between the two major states, the more understanding they reach on the need to resolve outstanding regional crises. This is why we believe that the international atmosphere is suitable today for a good and sound preparation for the convening of a UN-organized international conference. But the United States is trying to slow its advance to a responsible handling of the Middle East crisis, as shown in U.S. Secretary of State Baker's statement last week. That slowing down would have been logical if the U.S. Administration had no detailed information on conditions in the occupied Arab territories and the facts concerning a peaceful, just solution.

[Sadiq] Can it be said that that slowing down is not innocent?

[Maqsud] Yes. It reflects the U.S. Administration's hesitation to exploit new factors in the interests of a peaceful solution in the region. [passage omitted]

[Sadiq] How will the facts you mentioned affect the meetings of U.S. Administration officials with Shamir during his visit next month?

[Maqsud] Any leniency with Shamir during his coming visit to Washington will make him persist in his intransigence and determination to frustrate international peace plans and to abort the gains which the international community has secured, in terms of the impetus given to the peace process in the Middle East. This would then represent U.S. weakness against Israel at a time when the international community expects the new administration to be neutral and free from the narrow constraints imposed by strategic relations between the United States and Israel. Shamir's visit must provide an opportunity for the new U.S. Administration to inform Israel of its commitment to the State Department's statement on Israel's human right violations in the occupied Palestinian territory, to join international condemnation of these practices, and to free U.S. decision-making from Israeli blackmail operations and attempts. [passage omitted]

Islamic Affairs

Iran Consults ICO To Convene Rushdie Meeting

LD2802094889 Kuwait KUNA in English 0810 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Excerpts] United Nations, Feb 28 (KUNA)—Iran is consulting with the members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in order to convene a meeting here to consider the Salman Rushdie affair over his controversial novel "Satanic Verses".

A Jordanian diplomat told KUNA Monday that although he was aware of such consultations, his mission did not receive any formal request for such a meeting.

Jordan is current chairman of the ministerial meeting of the organisation of the Islamic Conference.

Other diplomats belonging to (?the Islamic) world said Iran is indeed busy consulting on the Rushdie affair. However, they added, it is very much doubtful that the request for such a meeting will be made by Iran, which called for Rushdie's death.

They said if the consultations are positive a meeting will take place in the next few days. They do not expect more than a debate and a statement condemning Rushdie, the Indian-born British author who is still in hiding somehwere in England.

Meanwhile, it was announced today that the Islamic countries' foreign ministers are scheduled to meet in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in mid-March to discuss possible measures against Rushdie and his publishers.

In a related matter, several thousand Muslims demonstrated over the weekend in Manhattan, New York, in front of the offices of Viking Penguin, the American publisher of the "Satanic Verses". [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

Unified National Leadership Issues Call No 35

JN2702173589 Sanaa Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1605 GMT 27 Feb 89

['Text' of Call No 35 issued by the Unified National Leadership of the Intifadah [Uprising]; date, place not given]

[Text] Call No 35, call of the one people and the one leadership. O people of the State of Palestine: Further struggle, further escalation, and further sacrifices. Your heroic deeds, your sacrifices, and the precious blood of your martyrs will shorten the age of occupation and remove the occupation's illusions, which have been a subject of wagers by the occupation for 20 years. They will also build the edifice of our independent Palestinian state, which has become a reality. O stonethrowing cubs, O heroes of the national liberation war, you have embodied and baptized national unity with the pure blood that has watered the soil of the homeland. This blood has constituted the bastion of defiance and steadfastness in confronting the occupation forces and has defeated occupation despite all means of repression and starvation. This blood has also foiled all the suspect plans of occupation.

Our defeated enemy is once again desperately trying to resort to the known colonial policy of divide and rule, and is attempting, through the remainder of its low-minded agents, to create confusion, spread estrangement and sedition, and fabricate differences. However, you have been and will continue to be the ones capable of foiling any attempt to undermine both national relations and the unified struggle of our masses. O heroes of the glorious intifadah, the fascist Rabin and his terrorists are continuing the war of annihilation against our people's masses. However, the heroes, the iron arms, and the gigantic people are affirming their determination to attain freedom and independence. They are also insisting on the intifadah and its militant activities in order to reach a comprehensive national disobedience, which is the reply to the fascist Zionist practices and the only way to defeat occupation and embody the independent State of Palestine. This state is only a stone's throw away.

While waging the struggle with you and through you, the Unified National Leadership of the Intifadah, the PLO's arm and its organic extension, emphasizes the following matters:

1. The Unified National Leadership welcomes Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's tour of the region, as well as Soviet efforts to hold an international conference and form the preparatory committee of this conference. It appeals to the permanent Security Council member states and the international community to support these efforts.

2. The Unified National Leadership denounces the U.S. veto against the UN Security Council resolution criticizing the Zionist enemy's repressive practices against our people. This veto shows that what was mentioned in the human rights report issued by the U.S. Department of State on Israel's human rights violations is only a U.S. attempt to absorb the growing world indignation at the policy of Washington and Tel Aviv that is hostile to our people's rights. Given the hostile U.S. stand toward our people, we assert that we will not retreat or surrender. Washington will realize that our people, who are recording the most splendid heroic deeds, are no less determined than the Vietnamese people.

3. While calling on all sectors of Israelis to realize the truth of the impasse they are experiencing, given the deception of their leadership, the Unified National Leadership affirms that there is no way but to recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of our generous Palestinian people and also to acknowledge our people's rights to freedom and independence. Proceeding from this call, the Unified National Leadership affirms that the meetings with some Israeli circles should be founded on a clear political basis, based on exposing the occupation's practices, on working to remove occupation, on acknowledging negotiations with the PLO as part of an international conference, and on recognizing our people's right to self-determination. Consequently, the leadership stresses its support for meeting with Israeli forces that acknowledge these rights and oppose the continuation of occupation. It also affirms that the Notre Dame Hotel meeting with Palestinian personalities is in harmony with this.

4. The entrenchment of the relationship with the Hamas movement in the State of Palestine, which strengthens the confrontation with the occupation forces and prepares for the achievement of the unity of struggle on the land of our beloved state, is welcomed.

5. The Arab countries are called on to honor their commitments to the PLO to support the masses of our people, to enable them to continue their confrontation with the occupation forces, and to praise those countries that honor their commitments to support the cause of our people and their just struggle.

The Unified National Leadership, which affirms the intensification of the struggle, calls for the following:

1. The necessity for the immediate resignation of employees working in identity card offices, with no exception.

2. The abstention from the paying of fines imposed by the Zionist courts on the sons of our people. These fines constitute a main source of finance for the enemy's treasury.

3. The response of the owners of producer and nonproducer establishments to the Unified National Leadership call issued on raising the wages of their employees in accordance with the [Jordanian] dinar's devaluation on the one hand and inflation on the other hand. They should not dismiss their workers. They should also not deduct the days of general strike from their wages. The call also asks you to improve production. It affirms that these institutions are not obliged to use their products in Zionist factories to supply the growing demand.

4. The work to develop and strengthen the productive cooperatives in all parts of the nation. The Unified National Leadership calls on all concerned institutions and bodies to provide the means of backing and support for these institutions. They should also strengthen home economics.

5. Prices of consumer products to be fixed and not tampered with because any such practice serves only the occupation, as well as the importance of guiding consumption and dispensing with unnecessary materials.

6. Strike forces and popular committees to continue to pursue those promoting Israeli products, the accountants who present the tax lists, and the factories that market Zionist products under Arab names.

7. UNRWA to comply with the demands of its employees and raise their salaries as did other institutions.

8. The formation of funds for family solidarity and cooperation in every village and camp.

O people of sacrifice, the Unified National Leadership, along with the masses of our people, realizes that the national battle and the liberation war against the occupation is long and that it is furnished with thorns, sacrifice, and pain. However, we know the way to salvation, the way of struggle. We are also aware that the occupation forces are intensifying the indiscriminate detention campaign. Their aim in doing this is to decrease the flaming intifidah's effectiveness. Furthermore, we know of the invading forces' practices, such as attacks on the properties of our people and the theft of their money. These measures are nothing but further proof of their bankruptcy. However, the occupation has been driven away, and so have its forces. They will only reap failure.

The Unified National Leadership informs the masses of our people that we all, without exception, have to confront the occupation's practices. It declares that the masses of our people will powerfully confront the enemy's attempt to impose the exchange of identity cards. We must all refuse to cooperate on this issue. We are representatives of a national identity. Our response to the occupation's attempts will be to throw away the military identity card as soon as the occupation forces attempt to implement changing identity cards. O our masses, let us all work at preparing ourselves and our strengths to intensify and to pull through an intensified stage of struggle in the near future. Let us work at stepping up our determination and storing the essential goods.

While we are preparing ourselves for a new militant stage, we highly appreciate our brave masses in brave Gaza Strip for forcing the enemy to close the police stations. Our brave people in Qalqilyah and Nabulus also burned tax departments. The Zionist administration apparatus is also being destroyed. Merchants in Ramallah, Bethlehem, and all over the homeland are continuing their brave confrontation with the tax collectors. Our efforts to defend and strengthen the intifadah's achievements require us to adopt the policy of taking the offensive and launching initiatives in our national conflict. Let us work hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder to promote the achievement of the intifadah's slogans by making them our daily militant program and interpreting them on the ground of confrontation.

The Unified Leadership calls on our people's masses to carry out the following militant activities:

1. Declaring Tuesday, 28 February, a day of comprehensive strike to stress our people's boycott of the Teddy Kollek municipal elections in our state's capital, holy Jerusalem, where the strike teams will paralyze public and private communications.

2. Considering Wednesday, 1 March, a day of escalation to protest the repressive arrest campaigns and the policy of demolishing houses.

3. Declaring Saturday, 4 March, a day of popular anger to confront the occupation forces and the gangs of its armed settlers and to pelt them with stones and Molotov cocktails.

4. Declaring Monday, 6 March, a day of comprehensive strike to protest the policy of stultification and the closure of the educational institutions. All the international bodies and institutions are urged to continue their pressure on the occupation authorities to reopen these institutions.

5. Sending congratulations from the Unified Leadership on the occasion of 8 March, the international day of women, to the Palestinian women and hailing their heroism as well as their participation and sacrifice in the national independence war. It also hails the steadfastness of our women detainees in the occupation's prisons. The Unified Leadership also stresses the need to bolster the unity of the Palestinian women's movement inside the state of Palestine within the framework of the unified women's council. It also calls for staging marches and demonstrations to confront the occupation forces on this occasion.

6. Declaring Wednesday and Thursday, 8 March and 9 March, days of a comprehensive strike to mark the 16th month of the intifadah and commemorate the martyrs of our people and the intifadah by further confronting the occupation forces. Prayers will also be performed on Friday for the souls of the martyrs. This day will be considered a day of solidarity with the families of the martyrs and wounded.

7. Declaring Saturday, 11 March, a day of solidarity with the detainees, who are confronting the occupation forces in the jails, and a day of protest over the occupation's practices against our heroic detainees.

8. Considering 12, 13, 14, and 15 March days of popular anger against the occupation and the practices of its forces and settlers.

Abu Sharif Calls on U.S. To Initiate Talks

LD2402194689 Kuwait KUNA in English 1808 GMT 24 Feb 89

[Text] London, Feb 24 (KUNA)—A senior aide to PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat has called on the U.S. to take concrete steps towards initiating the negotiating process in the Middle East, with a view to securing a just settlement there.

Addressing the London-based Foreign Press Association Friday, Bassam Abu Sharif stressed that "This year is very important for peace in the Middle East".

The PLO political and information adviser pointed out that there exists "A real opportunity now and it should not be wasted".

He underlined that the organisation is committed to its peace initiative, despite the flat rejection by Israel's Premier Yitzhak Shamir of the latest PLO appeal for direct talks.

"We hope the United States and Europe will do their best to convince Israel to sit down and negotiate peace", Abu Sharif added.

He described the latest developments as very important and emphasized that the Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's visit to the Middle East was "extremely significant".

It gave a push to efforts towards securing a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Abu Sharif expressed the hope that the Soviet move would not be an isolated one and it would be joined by other permanent members of the UN Security Council to pave the way for the international conference.

The senior PLO official lashed out strongly at Shamir saying "He has proved again that he is "Mr No, no to efforts to bring peace in the Middle East".

During the press conference, Abu Sharif gave his backing to the Soviet idea of appointing a personal envoy of the United Nations on the Middle East.

He underlined that the PLO also supports the proposal to set up a preparatory committee in order to lay the ground-work for the international peace conference.

He defended the role of the five-permanent members, making it clear that they are "The best guarantee to any future agreement".

Responding to a query, Abu Sharif disclaimed any knowledge of a press report today that the Soviet Union has proposed the convening of reconciliation talks between the PLO and Syria in Moscow.

Turning to the situation in the occupied territories, he condemned again the Israeli brutal crackdown on the Palestinian uprising.

The PLO adviser attacked the Israeli "state terrorism against the Palestinians and the Lebanese".

He wanted Shamir to renounce "state terrorism in the West Bank and Gaza".

Abu Sharif re-affirmed that the PLO recognises the two-state solution, and called on Israel to withdraw its occupation forces from the West Bank and Gaza.

He also questioned: "Does Israel recognise the United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338, which we were asked to accept".

In response to another question, he confirmed that 96 states have already recognised the newly proclaimed independent Palestinian state.

Abu Sharif attached great importance to the meeting in Vienna on March seven between the Soviet and the American foreign ministers, and believed that they would deal extensively with the Middle East.

He is currently on a working visit to the UK, and he is due tomorrow to address the Oxford Union society seminar on the Middle East, entitled "Prospects for Negotiations".

Two Knesset members, Hayim Oron (MAPAM) and Dedi Zucker (Citizens' Rights Movement) will take part in the discussions in the university city in southern England.

'Arafat on PLO-Israeli Talks, USSR Role

JN2702183189 Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic 26 Feb 89 pp 1, 17

[By Yusuf al-Sharif]

[Text] Cairo—At a closed meeting of the heads of the AAPSO organizational committees, held in Cairo, PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat said that indirect talks between the PLO and Israel had started in Cairo during the past 2 days, and that Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze had conveyed the viewpoints and replies of each party to the other on matters related to the Middle East peace prospects.

In an exclusive statement to AL-WATAN, Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] said the Soviets are willing to play a prominent and active role in pushing events in the Middle East toward the holding of an international peace conference. He said that the simultaneous presence in Cairo of Shevardnadze, the PLO chairman, and Israeli Foreign Minister Arens was not a coincidence.

He said the coming days will reveal that the Soviets continue to firmly support the Palestinian people's legitimate rights and to play a dynamic role on the level of activating the indirect talks between the Palestinians and Israelis.

Observers have noted that Yasir 'Arafat's reference to this role came in reply to U.S. President Bush's recent remarks in which he ruled out an active Soviet role during Shevardnadze's Middle East tour that would lead to an international peace conference.

Abu 'Ammar added that Shevardnadze had informed him that Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon had agreed to form an Arab five-member dialogue committee, to be joined by the PLO, in order to draw up the main points for solving the Middle East question. The Soviet Union will transfer the committee's views to Israel and vice versa.

In conclusion, Yasir 'Arafat said the nine-member nonaligned committee, which met in Geneva, had adopted strong resolutions in support of the Palestinian initiatives. In case Israel and the United States do not respond to those initiatives within a year, the leaders of the nonaligned states would call for an extraordinary UN General Assembly session under the slogan of unity for the sake of peace, as was the case during the Korean war and the Congolese crisis. In such a case, the UN General Assembly's resolutions will be as effective as those issued by the Security Council.

Abu 'Ammar strongly warned against the seriousness of the Israeli-American plotting, as well as plotting by other countries, to aggravate the sectarian situation in Lebanon. He praised the efforts of the Kuwait-led six-member Arab committee for initiating dialogue with all parties in a bid to rescue Lebanon.

'Arafat on Shevardnadze Talks

LD2702235189 Budapest Television Service in Hungarian 2015 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Interview with PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat by Alajos Chrudinak in Cairo on 23 February; 'Arafat speaks in Arabic, fading into superimposed Hungarian; recorded]

[Text] [Chrudinak] Yesterday you held talks with Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze. In your view, are there new proposals in the Soviet initiative? Do you see new elements in the initiative?

['Arafat] No doubt there are some. I would like to say that this is the first visit to the Middle East by Foreign Minister Shevardnadze; this is the first visit to Cairo in 15 years by a Soviet politician at Shevardnadze's level. However, the most important event of this visit is that talks began between Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and the Israeli delegation, as well as between Shevardnadze and the Palestinian delegation. These meetings took place on the same day and at the same place. In essence, indirect Israeli-Palestinian talks took place, with the mediation of Shevardnadze. What happened was that Foreign Minister Shevardnadze mediated; he told me about the Israeli standpoint, and he told me that he would pass on, in a similar manner, the Palestinian standpoint to the Israelis.

This mediation, or indirect talks, in itself is the beginning of an extremely important step in the new diplomatic opening that the Soviet Union is now directing. The objective of this is to set up a mechanism for diplomacy in the Middle East aimed at resolving the grave Middle East crisis. A Middle East peace conference should be convened as soon as possible so that peace can be established.

At the talks, the Israeli delegation tried to exclude Europe from this process, but Shevardnadze rejected this attempt. At his news conference, he stated that Europe must play a role in the Middle East settlement. The foreign minister pointed out that both the Palestinians and the Israelis have a right to live here. In the Palestine National Council we also decided—we adopted a resolution—that this crisis can be resolved only on the basis of the principle of two states-two peoples.

What does this mean? What is the subject of the UN Resolution 181 passed in 1947?

[Chrudinak] The division of Palestine into two...

['Arafat] Yes, and it is also Israel's sole birth certificate. The West, the United States, and other countries recognize Israel precisely on the basis of this UN resolution, Israel's birth certificate, this document. What does this document say? Its first clause stipulates the creation of a Palestinian Arab state. The second clause declares the creation of a Jewish state. However, only one of the states has come into being. Where is the other one?

[Chrudinak] Do you also think that now, after Afghanistan, in this historical period, there is a certain accord or agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States on the necessity of resolving the Middle East crisis? In this connection, what did Shevardnadze tell you?

['Arafat] What are you thinking of?

[Chrudinak] Is there some kind of mutual understanding between Moscow and Washington?

['Arafat] No doubt they are continuously holding talks and exchanging opinions on this issue. Foreign Minister Shevardnadze told me that on 6 March, in 1 week in Vienna, he will meet U.S. Secretary of State Baker and the most important topic of their discussions will be the Middle East.

[Chrudinak] Thus, in Shevardnadze's view, is there a hope that the United States will relinquish its unilateral, separate diplomacy?

['Arafat] Yes, he thinks so. However, the new U.S. Administration must now be given a few months or weeks to work out the new U.S. Middle East policy.

[Chrudinak] Was it you or Shevardnadze at the Cairo talks who raised the possibility that, before an international peace conference, talks between you and your Israeli counterpart, Shamir, should begin in Moscow?

['Arafat] I told Foreign Minister Shevardnadze: If the Israelis are willing to begin a dialogue with us with Soviet mediation I am also ready for it.

[Chrudinak] How did they react to it?

['Arafat] Favorably, of course.

[Chrudinak] The Israelis?

['Arafat] I did not know that you were asking about the Israelis. They have not yet replied to it.

[Chrudinak] What was discussed at the talks? What did Shevardnadze tell you?

['Arafat] Look, I cannot speak on behalf of the Soviet Union. Ask Shevardnadze about that, but do not ask me.

[Chrudinak] I am asking: What did Shevardnadze tell you?

['Arafat] Should I tell you everything he told me? Mr Chrudinak, would it be correct if I were to tell you everything now?

[Chrudinak] Not everything.

['Arafat] If I were able to tell you, we would have made the talks open.

[Chrudinak] If only that were so! The journalists would be so happy if they could take part in these talks!

Shamir says that he does not believe you, and that with your Geneva statements and the most recent decision of the Palestinian parliament, you, properly speaking, are misleading...

['Arafat, interrupting] I do not believe him either.

[Chrudinak] Then what is your opinion?

['Arafat] I do not believe him either. That is understandable, since we are enemies. We are opponents. Well, with whom does a person normally make peace? Well, does he not do so with his enemy? It is not our friends with whom we normally make peace. A person lives peacefully, in peace, with his friends. Thus, it is with his opponents that a person has to make peace.

[Chrudinak] In the most recent resolution of the Palestine National Council and in your Geneva statements, there is talk of recognizing Israel. Would you tell us what this recognition means?

['Arafat] We stated that the solution is the side-by-side existence of the two states. The two states means that, just like the Israelis have a state, the Palestinians also have the right to have their own state. We accepted this. We accepted that there should be two states on our land, in Palestine. This means a strategic turnabout in our policy. This is the new strategy of the PLO, and it is not a tactic. There is now a historic opportunity to create peace, but if we let this opportunity slip by, dangerous and bloody wars can break out in the Middle East. The 6-day, 3-day, and 6-hour wars have ended once and for all; the period of lightning wars has expired.

[Chrudinak] How do you conceive coexistence, existence side-by-side with Israel? Many people ask where this new Palestinian state will be in terms of territory, where will this state come about?

['Arafat] In this matter, I abide by the resolution passed by the Arab summit conference in Fez.

[Chrudinak] That is, the West Bank and Gaza.

['Arafat] That is what the resolution says. The two will be linked by a corridor. I did not invent that. It was an all-Arab decision that I support.

[Chrudinak] Is it possible...

['Arafat, interrupting] We also belong to the Arab nation.

[Chrudinak] You mentioned a corridor. Thus, this would be the (?land) that would link the West Bank and Gaza.

['Arafat] There have been such solutions elsewhere as well. It is not feasible that the implementation of the UN Resolution No 242 should be called to account from only one side, and not from both [sides]. The Israelis demanded that the Palestinians recognize Resolution 242, but Israel must also recognize it; Resolution 242 states that Israel must withdraw from all occupied areas...

[Chrudinak] In your view, what will be discussed at the talks to prepare for the international peace conference? What will be discussed there? The borders? Security issues? What?

['Arafat] Everything. We have put everything on the table. We would like to say a lot of things. We have already prepared our negotiating file about everything. We will go to the talks with worked-out ideas. We would like to tell the Israelis many things, and I know that they have many things to tell us. The Israeli-Palestinian dialogue naturally will not be some kind of wedding feast, a banquet. We probably will not celebrate and drink champagne. We have to meet in order to solve problems. An international conference is the most suited to this, since it ensures guarantees for both of us.

[Chrudinak] International guarantees.

['Arafat] Not only for us, but for them as well.

[Chrudinak] Are you willing, since compromise is compromise, to make further concessions if Israel is also ready to make concessions?

['Arafat] Look, we made a considerable concession by accepting UN Resolution 242.

[Chrudinak] Yes, but I was thinking...

['Arafat, interrupting] In Palestine, we recognize the existence of both states. That is the firm and resolute policy of the PLO. It is a strategy, not a tactic.

[Chrudinak] Are further concessions possible?

['Arafat] Where do you want to send us? Do you want to push us to (?death)?

[Chudinak] I was thinking that...

['Arafat, interrupting] Perhaps you were charged by the Israelis to argue with me over this.

[Chrudinak] Not at all.

['Arafat] Then why do you ask me about it and why should I talk to you about the details? Mr Chrudinak, why should we have to talk now about the details?

[Chrudinak] Because the matter interests me.

['Arafat] Were you charged with this?

[Chrudinak] I am curious.

['Arafat] I, however, do not want to reply to curious journalists. I will speak about this at the political talks.

[Chrudinak] So you will preserve your secrets until the talks?

['Arafat] Mr Chrudinak—later, when the talks have begun. Obviously, at the talks, we will not stare at each another; we will debate with them and they will debate with us. They have ideas, and so do we. A pile of negotiating material has accumulated. A separate committee is dealing with every topic. Imagine: A separate committee is dealing with every detailed issue, every clause, everything that occurs to you and does not occur to you. I know how they think; we have studied and examined everything.

[Chrudinak] Is it conceivable that the international peace conference might be convened this year?

['Arafat] Only this year remains for us. If it does not happen this year, nothing will happen. Then an international crisis will break out, and we will move away from peace.

[Chrudinak] Why is this year the final year?

['Arafat] This is the year of opportunities, because next year the U.S. President will say his administration is preoccupied with the congressional elections.

[Crhudinak] Is this the year of solutions according to the Soviets as well?

['Arafat] According to Shevardnadze, the peace conference must be convened within 6 or perhaps 9 months. I share his opinion, and I fully support this Soviet initiative, the proposals made by Shevardnadze on his current tour. We support and accept this initiative.

PPSF Decries 'Arafat Call for Union With Israel

JN2702171089 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1615 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Beirut—The Palestinian Popular Struggle Front [PPSF] has denounced the statements made by Yasir 'Arafat that called for establishing an economic union with the Zionist entity, which will include Jordan, together with Lebanon and the PLO. The PPSF also denounced 'Arafat's call for direct negotiations.

The PPSF Political Bureau held a meeting devoted to discussing Palestinian developments. The PPSF Political Bureau said in a statement issued today that these statements constitute a stab against the Palestinian Arab people's struggle; are a deviation from, and a clear and dangerous violation of, the resolutions adopted by various PNC sessions; and come within the context of the grave concessions, which were made by 'Arafat and his leadership and which bring about the gravest dangers and damage to the rights of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation.

The statement continues: These statements and policies come within the framework of the bargaining course and in response to U.S. and Zionist conditions, which aim to abort the Palestinian people's intifadah [uprising] in the occupied Arab territories.

The statement called on Palestinian nationalist factions, forces, and figures to shoulder their responsibilities and escalate their struggle to face the policy of concessions and bargaining.

The statement described the Soviet foreign minister's visit to the region as constituting important and positive steps on the path of struggle of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation to expel the Zionist occupation from all Palestinian- and Arab-occupied territories and establishing the independent Palestinian state on Palestinian national soil.

Khalaf on U.S., European Role in Peace Process

JN1902095089 Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 17 Feb 89 pp 24-26

[Interview with Fatah Central Committee member Salah Khalaf by Sana' al-Sa'id—date, place not given]

[Text] [No question as published] [Khalaf] U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's recent statements, in which he said it would be impossible for the United States to impose a solution on Israel or to pressure it into making concessions, indicate that, regardless of U.S. criticisms of Israel as expressed in the U.S. report on human rights in the occupied territories, such criticisms will not lead to any U.S. pressure on Israel.

I believe that the United States is the only party that can press for a solution in the region and for the convening of an international conference that leads to real peace in the Middle East. For if Israel does not take the United States into account, no other state or quarter can then influence it, with the exception of Israeli public opinion, which began to express itself more clearly and began to respond to the Palestinian peace offensive in at least a satisfactory manner, though not a quick one. Hence, the United States is the only side that is nominated to play a role in this. What is stronger than the United States, in my opinion, is Israeli public opinion, which, once it is convinced of something, can influence its government and make it act differently toward the Palestinian peace initiative.

[Al-Sa'id] Although Israel has asked the United States to end its dialogue with the PLO on the pretext of violating its pledge to renounce terrorism when it carried out an operation in southern Lebanon on 4 February, the U.S. report on human rights in the occupied territory ignored Israel's demand and condemned its repressive practices. What does the U.S. stand mean to you?

[Khalaf] I believe that the U.S. stand within the Human Rights Commission is commensurate with what we were looking forward to. It is in harmony with the role we believe the United States should play—the role of condemning Israel's savage practices and repressive measures against the intifadah [uprising] and the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territory. These criticisms have exposed the reality of the Israeli stand, especially as Israel is always boasting of its traditions of democracy and freedom. The U.S. report came to objectively monitor Israel's terrorist, repressive practices because we should never view terrorism with one eye but with both eyes. We should view what Israel is doing with our people in the occupied territory and even in southern Lebanon or anywhere else in the world in the same way we view any other operation whether inside or outside the occupied territory.

Therefore, I would like to state that we have positively valued the U.S. stand in the Human Rights Commission and considered it a sound beginning of a U.S. stand which we can call neutral that is not biased toward Israel.

[Al-Sa'id] Is it not possible that this is merely a facade, that U.S. policy is, in content and essence, still in favor of Israel, and that this will not much change the United States' commitments to Israel or the policy Bush's administration is forming toward the region?

[Khalaf] We aspire for a neutral U.S. stand. This does not mean that the United States is now adopting a neutral stand. However, when the United States adopts a good stand, we should admit this and highlight it regardless of the basic U.S. stand toward Israel. From this angle, we believe that the recent U.S. criticism of Israel as cited in its report on human rights in the occupied territory is a good stand. We should assess every good stand separately. Whenever the United States is biased, we should indicate this bias and condemn it; whenever it is objective and committed to humanitarian stands and issues, we should mention this and not ignore it.

[Al-Sa'id] Are you now convinced of the contents and level of the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue, or is the dialogue no more than a marginal protocol formality in which the United States concentrates on terrorism only and confines talks to its ambassador in Tunis, Robert Pelletreau?

[Khalaf] Thus far, we are not satisfied with the form of dialogue, but eventually I can say that we are not the ones who decide on the level and topics for dialogue. It is the United States that decides the form of the relationship with us. Although we are happy that the United States has opened dialogue with the Palestinian people, today's development is only a very simple beginning before the United States supports the peoples' causes objectively and neutrally, including our own cause. If you ask me if I am satisfied, I say no, we are not satisfied. We believe the United States will not be serious in its dialogue if the Palestinian-American dialogue is delayed and if things are not discussed in depth and on a higher level. The picture will then be that the decision to start a dialogue with the Palestinians was a formal decision meant to reply to our peace initiatives and to superficially satisfy U.S. public opinion so that the basic issues will not be addressed. Hence, we look forward to promoting the level of dialogue and its agenda to include the basic issues in the region.

[Al-Sa'id] Do you have the least doubt that the United States is using dialogue with the Palestinians for another purpose, that is, aborting and eliminating the intifadah?

[Khalaf] I can frankly tell you no. Nobody can end the intifadah, because it has become part of the people's daily life. Once the uprising is ended, the people will feel that all the sacrifices they offered, not only during the 15-month intifadah, but throughout the time of occupation, have been wasted, and the people will become slaves of occupation. This is how every child, woman, man, and youth in the occupied land thinks. Therefore, the intifadah will never come to an end, nor will it be checked by any stand until the removal of occupation. Even the United States itself, through its initial dialogue with the Palestinians, did not raise the question of the intifadah, and this is something good. Even when it explained the meaning of terrorism, it did not mention the intifadah at all as if it accepts the Palestinians' right to continue the intifadah as long as Israel continues to occupy the Arab lands.

[Al-Sa'id] Have you had accurate knowledge of U.S. motives behind the launching of a dialogue that has not been strengthened or enhanced and that has not turned into a dialogue on substantial matters?

[Khalaf] After the PNC resolutions and the 'Arafat Geneva speech, the United States had no choice but to take a stand on these new developments.

[Al-Sa'id] Are you sensing any real change in the U.S. Administration's policy toward the region?

[Khalaf] So far, we cannot say that a real change has taken place. However, we aspire to see a real change take place in the future.

[Al-Sa'id] Palestinian officials have predicted that the dialogue with the Americans within the framework of the Bush administration will be insurmountably difficult and too hard. In other words, they are saying that the dialogue will be between two adversaries and not between an adversary and a judge. What is your opinion on this?

[Khalaf] The most important thing about the Palestinian policy is that the zero point is considered the criterion. If the zero point or percent is replaced by something better, that would be considered progress and something realized. We view the dialogue with the Americans in accordance with this perspective. We began with the zero point. If things develop and the U.S. stand registers a 1 percent improvement, this would be good. If the improvement registered turns out to be 2 percent, this would be better, as zero percent is rock bottom.

[Al-Sa'id] Within the framework of the efforts to bolster and enhance the dialogue with the Americans, have you asked Egypt during your talks with Egyptian officials to work in order to activate the dialogue with the Americans?

[Khalaf] We have asked Egypt to effect moves with the Americans with the aim of pushing the Palestinian peace initiative to a position in which a real dialogue with the Americans can take place. Of course, the stand voiced by President Mubarak, Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, and the other officials whom we have met was very positive in this regard. For its part, Egypt will effect the required political moves.

[Al-Sa'id] Considering your aspirations for an activation of the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue with the aim of strengthening and bolstering that dialogue, are you looking forward to seeing the current U.S. Administration extend an invitation to Yasir 'Arafat to meet U.S. President Bush or Secretary of State James Baker?

[Khalaf] We wish to see this happen. However, all this is contingent upon the U.S. stands as regards developing the dialogue with us. The level to be attained by this dialogue is contingent upon the United States. However, we believe that the extension of an invitation by the U.S. Administration to 'Arafat to visit the United States is something necessary and essential. As the United States is listening to the opinions of the Palestinian people, it must extend such an invitation to 'Arafat so that U.S. President Bush and his administration can have face-to-face and direct meetings with the Palestinian leadership and the parties that can help produce a solution in the region.

[Al-Sa'id] James Baker has recently made statements published by TIME magazine affirming that his administration has not abandoned the international conference idea, provided that such a conference is well-prepared for and leads to direct negotiations. Baker also said that those who believe that the United States might exert pressure on Israel with the aim of imposing a solution and extracting concessions are mistaken. What are your views on this? Can these statements be viewed as a major clue to help assess the U.S. Administration's policy vis-a-vis the region?

[Khalaf] While dealing with daily events, it is natural to see the U.S. Administration voice such statements. However, in the end, realities will impose themselves on the United States and Israel.

These facts are represented by the continuation of the Palestinian people's intifadah and by the fact that there is no solution and peace in the region without the Palestinian side led by the PLO. As for now, what is said is said. Over 40 years have gone by while we waited. We are not a hasty people. When the U.S. Administration feels like being a basic stabilizing element and moving away from its stand that is biased toward Israel to a neutral stand, then we will be ready. We are waiting and have waited for a long time. We stand to lose nothing whatsoever.

[Al-Sa'id] While concentrating on the international conference as the sole option that could be overcome to reach any other option, some Palestinian officials tended to say that reality and logic are evidence that the international conference will not be held either this year or the next.

[Khalaf] I believe it is wrong to say that it will or will not be held. This is a wager on the balances of power in the next stage. The intifadah's continuation on the one hand, the continuous development in the Palestinian political stand and the presence of a basic minimum of Arab solidarity supporting and urging Palestinian action on the other hand, will impose on the Americans and the Israelis the conditions for holding the international conference. However, it is not yet known exactly when the convening date will be.

[Al-Sa'id] There is a report published by European and American experts in which they claimed that the establishment of an independent Palestinian state could lead to disturbing the stability in the region, endangering the security of such countries as Jordan and Israel, and the start of another war—a view reflected by the latest remarks of the U.S. vice president who said that his country still opposes the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

[Khalaf] What I am saying here is the opposite of that. The absence of a Palestinian state might very well be the source of all the dangers mentioned in the report. The existence of a Palestinian state could back stability and peace in the region. The absence of a Palestinian state is what makes the region prone to coups and changes. Therefore, there must be peace with Israel through what the PLO bravely called for and the whole world admired. If this step does not yield anything, what could the result be? What are the repercussions? As far as we are concerned, we will never stop our action in accordance with the present line we have adopted and along which we will continue.

The repercussions of this lie in the other option which might crop up; the extremist Muslims, the extremist pan-Arabists, and all those awaiting to lead in the arena—certainly a worrying issue. As opposed to that, responding to the PLO's call for peace and establishing the Palestinian state is what will be the factor for peace in the region and what will decrease the crowds and bases found here and there. Everything that is happening is a loss to the European and U.S. bodies and the whole world, in the final analysis. The absence of the Palestinian state creates a tense atmosphere, whereas the presence of the Palestinian state would create stability.

[Al-Sa'id] On the European stand, do you think that Europe has changed much since the 1980 Venice Declaration on the Palestine question and the PLO?

[Khalaf] Yes, there has been a relative change. But let us not take them together as the EEC but separately. I believe that the British stand, for instance, was somehow more developed than Britain's past stand. There is now an acceptable British stand. The stand of some Scandinavian states has also developed positively. France has also developed its stand. Now we will not talk about the European market as a European market until the results of the tour by the tripartite exploratory commission (Spain, Greece, and France) to some states in the region are known. They will then be able to launch a new European initiative, which I expect to be far more advanced than the Venice declaration, although the latter contained important basic points, including the European recognition of the right to self-determination, which is something good for the PLO.

[Al-Sa'id] This means that you are looking forward to positive results from the tripartite commission's efforts in the form of a unified initiative toward the Palestine question.

[Khalaf] We hope that the results of its exploration will reflect on the EEC states as a group, especially since there are European states like West Germany, which did not move or make any step following the PNC resolutions. Belgium also did not move well, while the Netherlands amd Denmark moved effectively.

[Al-Sa'id] This is despite the reservations expressed in Tunis by Palestinian officials over their dialogue with the Netherlands Foreign Ministry delegation, which raised strange and meaningless questions.

[Khalaf] This issue has been settled after the Netherlands delegation understood the real ideas it took from Arens and communicated to us. There is a difference between its ideas as a Netherlands delegation and ideas held by Israeli Foreign Minister Arens. However, this issue has finally been settled, as evidenced by the recent large Palestinian-European-Israeli gathering held at The Hague. It was a good meeting, and its results were good. The Palestinian viewpoint was explained so well that public opinion in the Netherlands began to support the Palestine question.

[Al-Sa'id] Many believe that a unified European stand may act as an element of presssure on the United States and that individual initiatives will not effect a change, especially on the U.S. Administration at this stage.

[Khalaf] Instead of pressure, we can talk about interaction and say that the European stand's interaction with the U.S. stand through convictions or advanced European stands helps much in developing the U.S. stand. All of us know that the United States is a superpower on which neither the Europeans nor others can exert pressure, but the U.S. and European ideas may interact to bring about a more developed U.S. stand.

[Al-Sa'id] The chances of success for a European initiative might diminish, especially if the EC is incapable of pleasing the two sides—the Arab and the Israeli. I wonder, could Europe convince the two sides, especially since Israel accuses it of being far from balanced, while the Arabs traditionally see it as bound to Israel?

[Khalaf] If we want to evaluate the real European stand, I would like to say that the Europeans are much more objective in many of their discussions and stands. We cannot say that the European stand is the same as the U.S. stand. The U.S. stand is biased, and our goal is to neutralize it. The European stand is more objective, regardless of its influence and development. Since 1980, there had been no development until after the PNC resolutions. However, we are awaiting the outcome of the explorations of the European troika committee on a progressive European stand. Then, this stand will undoubtedly have a positive effect on the U.S. stand.

[Al-Sa'id] This means that Europe is playing the role of the mediator and not the guarantor?

[Khalaf] The superpowers are the ones playing the role of the guarantor. The Soviet Union and the United States could play the role of the guarantor; however, it is definite that the catalyst here will be the European countries. Therefore, we should not neglect or diminish the influence and strength of the European role, because, internationally, it is highly evaluated. The United States definitely takes the European stand into account. This is why we see Israel strongly fighting the European stand, because it realizes that it is tending toward objectivity.

[Al-Sa'id] With the many changes, one of which is your brave initiative, I wonder whether there really is still U.S.-Israeli stubborness.

[Khalaf] From my point of view, I believe that the Israeli stand is hysterical, because it does not want to develop and does not view history. It sits back and blindfolds itself, without seeing any of the developments taking place in the region. This always happens to every leadership that contracts political blindness and cannot see the correct path. Israel and its leadership are suffering from political blindness. It walks blindfolded, reliving the victories of 1967, and to a certain extent, its confrontations in the 1973 war. It still lives in the past of its invincible diplomacy and public opinion supporting it. Its leaders are guided by this complex up to this day. For them to wake up, the issue needs time. And here, Israeli public opinion will be faster than Israel in this regard.

[Al-Sa'id] Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens has recently made a statement saying that the best means to achieve a settlement is to hold direct negotiations between the parties to the regional conflict and added that the PLO has no role in such negotiations.

[Khalaf] Arens and the Israelis will continue to make such statements until the last moment comes. This is not something new. France did just that in Algeria in the past. It used to say: "There is no such thing as the FLN. We only cooperate with those inside the country." The French also used to say: "We will grant the Algerians a sort of autonomy, but the Sahara areas will be excluded from the autonomy to be granted to them. Afterward, we will grant them a sort of full autonomy, provided that those we deal with will be from inside and not outside Algeria." This is the same terminology being currently voiced by the Israelis about us. However, in the end Charles de Gaulle had no choice but to pursue the peace of the courageous and to negotiate with the FLN and the provisional government. Thus, Algeria gained its independence. The Nazis always say in the last throes of death that they will not negotiate with the movement leading the liberation process. We are confident that Israel will have, in the end, no party to negotiate with other than the PLO. I am of the opinion that the Israelis will succumb and that they will also head toward the international conference.

[Al-Sa'id] Israel is still insisting on the Jordanian solution, despite the fact that King Husayn severed Jordan's administrative ties with the West Bank. The analyses produced by Israel have continued to stress that Jordan is the alternative to the Palestinians, especially if we take into account, according to their allegations, that 77 percent of the Jordanian people are of Palestinian origin.

[Khalaf] We say that the issue pertaining to the Jordanian solution has been done away with and that King Husayn terminated this solution by severing ties with the West Bank. Thus, King Husayn has placed Israel before its obligations and face to face with the PLO. Hence, any return on the part of Israel to the Jordanian issue only seeks to create inter-Arab problems. An agreement with Jordan has been secured on the PLO's role. If an international conference were to be convened, the PLO would participate in it through either an independent delegation or through an Arab delegation in which both Jordan and the PLO would be represented. Israel must not play on this issue, as it has been settled. The Israelis seek to make our relations with Jordan deteriorate. However, they will not be able to achieve this.

[Al-Sa'id] What about the confederation involving the Palestinian entity, Jordan, and Israel?

[Khalaf] There will be a confederation with Jordan after the establishment of the state.

[Al-Sa'id] And with Israel?

[Khalaf] We say that our own state must be established first. Afterward, the Palestinian people will have the freedom to choose unity with any party on earth. However, the PNC resolution in this regard provides for a confederation with Jordan. In the end, the Palestinian people will be the only party who will have the final say on unity with Syria or any other party.

[Al-Sa'id] What would happen if you were to receive an invitation for a dialogue with Shamir or Arens?

[Khalaf] We will accept an invitation to the international conference when it is convened under UN auspices.

PFLP Claims Attack on South Lebanon Army

JN2802085489 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] The South Lebanon Army came under attack in the Jazzin town sector yesterday. The attack resulted in the killing of two soldiers and the wounding of others. The attack was claimed by the PFLP led by George Habash.

PFLP, DFLP Urge 'Immediate' UN Intervention

JN2802072489 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] The PFLP and the DFLP have issued a joint appeal to the United Nations for immediate intervention to prevent the continuing massacres against the Palestinian people in the occupied territory, especially in Nabulus.

Algeria

Bendjedid Receives Al-Qadhdhafi Message
LD2602214489 Algiers Domestic Service in French 1800 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] A message from President [title as heard] al-Qadhdhafi was handed to President Chadli Bendjedid at the presidential headquarters this morning by Mr Sa'd Mustafa Mujbir, secretary of the Libyan Brotherhood Bureau in Algiers.

Bessaieh Article Describes Role in Maghreb Union
PM2402084489 Algiers EL MOUDJAHID in French 19 Feb 89 p 1

[Article by Foreign Minister Boualem Bessaieh: "Algeria's Lucid and Generous Vision"]

[Text] To assess what has just been achieved in Marrakech, I think it is necessary to return to the Zeralda summit, which was the origin of the current Maghreb process. Zeralda was the scene of the initial consideration by our heads of state which enabled the Maghreb idea to reach its present stage of development. I think that their thinking can be summarized as follows:

If we look at the world political and economic map, the Maghreb is one of the few homogeneous areas outside the big contemporary groupings. A growing number of such initiatives are being taken in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and in regions which clearly have less potential than ours.

Economic integration and, more especially, political unity are long-term, if not very long-term tasks and there is therefore a high price to be paid for any delay as far as the future is concerned. Our present plans are aimed at ensuring our readiness in 20 or 30 years' time. I am saying that to stress that it was vital for our countries to start their efforts to achieve unity without further delay.

The world economy and world politics are now organized and will increasingly be organized in such a way that they leave our individual countries virtually no chance of having an influence or of competing in tomorrow's world. All the international statistics and economic studies show that it is only in a unit, a region, or a market of 100 million inhabitants that an economy can be built in a beneficial way and can be an integral part of international relations. That is the minimum size, and it is the size of the Maghreb.

I would say that it is a single Europe rather than a single European market which will be on our doorstep in the very near future. It presents us with some challenges which we will have to take up, not only to overcome the penalties it will impose on us, but above all to be able to be an equal and credible partner for it.

In our march toward Maghreb unity, we have problems—and sometimes problems which are difficult to solve—but in view of the issues which I have stressed, we must move forward and ensure that those problems are solved with the faith that what we intend to build together will help.

I wanted to reaffirm all these objective facts to highlight the fact that in Zeralda, everybody was convinced of the need to act as soon as possible but without haste, and that is precisely what we did to ensure that we arrived at the second Maghreb meeting in Marrakech with carefully considered ideas, clearly defined resources, and well prepared stages for our process.

It was in those conditions that our heads of state adopted the three documents forming the Maghreb union:

—The solemn declaration which constituted its political foundation;

—The Marrakech Treaty which constituted its legal foundation;

—The action [words illegible] which constituted its economic [words illegible] foundation.

I sincerely believe that we did what had to be done and that we did well. In other words:

—That we were neither overambitious nor underambitious, both of which are damaging for the united action which we intend to launch.

—That we observed the vital need for realism, gradual progress, and the rigorous assessment of our resources to avoid the frustrations and disappointments experienced in the past.

—Finally, that we have provided ourselves with flexible and operational structures which will enable us to take action now but which will be expanded and strengthened as the work of unity progresses and as its needs diversify.

In this context, I would like to stress a fact which concerns Algeria. We want to work to ensure that none of what has been agreed remains empty words and it is precisely for this reason that we proposed to our partners—and they agreed on this—that our action program should have priorities listed in stages, that the means of tackling these priorities should be well defined, and that a precise and stringent timetable should be fixed for implementing them.

As you have observed over the past few weeks, President Chadli Bendjedid has worked actively to ensure that this stage in the Maghreb process is a new achievement for Maghreb building. In Ifrane, Mesrata, Tunis, and Oran, President Bendjedid made Algeria's contribution to ensuring that the Marrakech summit was another high point in the fraternal Maghreb reconciliation and the launching of a carefully considered and executed Maghreb task. The head of state also made that contribution at all the meetings and political consultations which led to the success of the second Maghreb summit.

In Marrakech every one wanted to do well. The atmosphere was and is, I think, one of confidence and determination. The political climate of the Maghreb has emerged consolidated from the Marrakech summit and has been strengthened by the economic and social dimension which our region has just been given.

I would like to conclude by highlighting the fact that we wanted to prevent the Maghreb Union from isolation and a narrow view of its prospects and that is why it was decided that this union will be open to our Arab and African families.

Our union therefore maintains an open policy for the future which would strengthen its possibilities and its means of action and clearly shows that the Maghreb maintains indissoluble ties of unity with the Arab nation and Africa—ties which it wishes to accept and develop.

Cheloufi, Nezzar Meet With Soviet Ambassador

LD2602220689 Algiers Domestic Service in French 1800 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] General Mustafa Cheloufi, secretary general at the Defense Ministry, and Gen Khalid Nezzar, ANP [National People's Army] chief of staff, today received Soviet Ambassador to Algeria Vasiliy Taratuta. The conversation took place in the presence of Gen Abdelmalek (Rihiya) and Lieutenant Colonel Beldjelti. The Algerian and Soviet sides reviewed matters of mutual interest.

Egypt

Mubarak Discusses Sudanese Premier's Remarks

NC2702134889 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1250 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Cairo, 27 Feb (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak has denied that there is any Sudanese mediation designed to reconcile Egypt and Libya. He said that he is not aware that Sudan has undertaken any mediation in this regard. He pointed out that the one who did mediate between the two countries was Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat, who did so during a specific period, in order to halt the radio campaigns that were going on then. Mubarak added: I have not heard of the mediation which Sudanese Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi is talking about.

In remarks he made after his return from Kuwait today, President Mubarak asked: Is it logical that someone should come here every day and act as a mediator? Has the mediation process become a game and is there any reason for it?

Mubarak was commenting on the memorandum which Al-Mahdi sent to the Sudanese Armed Forces. In the memorandum, Al-Mahdi pointed out that Sudan is currently working to reconcile Egypt and Libya, that Egypt has taken a neutral stand on the war in southern Sudan, and that Saudi support for Sudan has not yet reached the level of the good feelings declared by Saudi Arabia.

In his statements, Mubarak also denied that Egypt is taking a neutral stand on the war in southern Sudan. He said: We have supported Sudan and the Sudanese Armed Forces. The Sudanese people know this and Egypt is still extending this support. He added: The Sudanese prime minister may want to blame the problems he is facing on Egypt and Saudi Arabia, but I know that Saudi Arabia has supported him and Egypt has supported him and has done a great deal to bring about peace in Sudan.

President Mubarak noted that Egypt had worked with Ethiopian President Mengistu to bring peace to Sudan until a peace agreement worked out by the Democratic Unionist Party was concluded. However, the Al-Ummah party, which is led by Al-Mahdi, spoiled it, he said.

President Mubarak then asked: Why is Egypt blamed for all this? Why is Al-Mahdi saying there is no cooperation? We had a charter for integration with them. They said there was no need for it and asked for the Brotherhood Charter to be signed. He added: This charter is merely a joint communique and has nothing to do with brotherhood or anything else. If this is aimed at making Egypt fight, why should we fight Ethiopia? War is not a game. Egypt cannot do more than it has done, after making them sit down with the leaders of the South. Why is it that every time anyone gets into a tight corner he blames his mistakes on Egypt?

Regarding Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi's visit to Egypt, scheduled for 4 March, President Mubarak said: He is welcome, but on the condition that he does not discuss the Brotherhood Charter, on which no action has been completed so far.

Asked whether he had agreed during his visit to Japan to hold a tripartite meeting with President Bush and Jordan's King Husayn, President Mubarak said that his talks with President Bush were bilateral. No date has been fixed yet for his visit to the United States, he said.

Replying to a question on his assessment of the Soviet proposals of Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze to resolve the Middle East problem, President Mubarak said that Shevardnadze's visit was an exploratory one to meet with Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens. He expressed belief that the proposals were very good and were not out of line with those of Egypt.

Asked whether the Soviet proposals conflict with the U.S. stand, President Mubarak said: The difference between them is that the Soviets are calling for an international conference, while the United States is committed to Israel, even though U.S. public opinion favors an international conference. I believe that the international conference is a very important process. It should not frighten Israel or any other country. Direct talks will be held through it. I see no justification at all for fearing an international conference. I have already said this in many international circles.

President Mubarak once again compared the international peace conference to an umbrella providing guarantees. The two superpowers and permanent members of the Security Council would take part. Then the parties would split up into geographical groups for direct talks without the intervention of the superpowers or the imposition of the view of any of them on any party, he declared. He denounced Israel's fear of an international conference and said that this fear is not comprehensible. The president expressed hope that the conference would be held this year. He stressed that it is difficult for the current situation to remain as it is because hatred and victims from all parties will increase.

Asked whether there are fears that these talks would be direct, without an umbrella, President Mubarak said: There is a separate philosophy on this. Why should not we start with the umbrella so as to have guarantees? The umbrella only provides the guarantees. Let the conference start and the speeches be delivered. After this, direct talks will be held. We will then return to the conference to report on the talks, so that the superpowers and permanent members of the Security Council can guarantee what has been agreed upon, without imposing anything on the parties.

Replying to a final question on his talks with UAE President Zayid ibn Sultan Al Nuhayyan and Kuwaiti Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Sabah, and on his talks in Tokyo, President Mubarak said that his talks in Tokyo were excellent and that he had met with many leaders, Japanese officials, members of Egyptian-Japanese friendship societies, businessmen, and officials of the ruling party. He added that his talks with Shaykh Zayid dealt with regional problems and developments in bilateral relations. He added that his talks with the amir of Kuwait centered on the same issues.

Sudan Requests 'Urgent' Military Assistance

NC2802084089 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 27 Feb p 1

[Report by Amin Radwan]

[Text] Cairo—Well-informed sources in Cairo said yesterday that Sudanese Ambassador Amin 'Abd al-Latif has asked the Egyptian Government to provide Sudan with "urgent military assistance."

According to the sources, the ambassador relayed his government's request in two separate meetings with Foreign Minister Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid and Defense Minister Field Marshal 'Abd al-Halim Abu Ghazalah.

The Egyptians have been asked to provide the Sudanese Forces with modern armored vehicles and a number of planes complete with Egyptian pilots. The Sudanese also requested 100 Egyptian experts in military planning, the sources added.

According to the same sources, Egyptian officials are showing interest in the Sudanese request. Egyptian President Husni Mubarak telephoned 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid from Tokyo last Saturday and instructed him to follow the current events in Sudan and take speedy action "to prevent foreign intervention in these events."

The sources mentioned that 'Abd al-Majid has sent a message to Sudanese Foreign Minister Hasan al-Turabi, voicing Egypt's support to the legitimate government in Sudan.

Mubarak Interviewed on Mideast Conference

NC2502103289 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0700 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] Tokyo, 25 Feb (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has again asserted the need to hold an international conference to discuss peace in the Middle East at the earliest possible opportunity. He said that all concerned parties, the two superpowers, and other permanent members of the UN Security Council must participate in this conference which, he pointed out, would constitute a stage of transition to direct negotiations among the concerned parties.

In a statement he made to six major Japanese newspapers with a combined circulation of 30 million copies daily, President Mubarak said that he believes there is nothing to prevent the convening of an international conference.

President Mubarak explained that Egypt's basic position on the peace process in the Middle East is to seek a compromise between the idea of holding an international conference, which is advocated by the majority of the Arab countries, the PLO, and the USSR, and the idea of conducting direct negotiations among the concerned parties, which the United States and Israel insist on as the only way to establish peace in the Middle East.

President Mubarak remarked that Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze was very flexible during his talks in Cairo and expressed the USSR's desire to participate in an international peace conference.

In the statements which the Japanese newspapers will publish today, President Mubarak emphasized the need for the USSR to attend the international conference in question. He added that he is currently doing his utmost to coordinate stands in order to hold the conference as soon as possible. He announced that he cannot guarantee 100 percent that the conference will be held this year.

President Mubarak noted that he had received an invitation from Soviet leader Mihail Gorbachev to visit the USSR and announced: there is nothing to prevent me from going to Moscow.

In his statements to the Japanese newspapers, President Husni Mubarak urged Israel to reconsider its position and move closer to the Egyptian viewpoint.

Commenting on the Palestinian intifadah [uprising] in the occupied territories, President Mubarak stressed that it is imperative to reach a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question because no party abroad can control the Palestinians. He added that the intifadah will not abate unless the Palestinians are given some hope about their future through holding an international peace conference and the announcement that serious consideration is being given to their self-determination.

President Mubarak expressed extreme regret at the continued shedding of Palestinian and Israeli blood.

The SANKEI SHIMBUN newspaper published a large photograph of President Mubarak with the caption "the Egyptian president says: Israel's disregard of the PLO is a grave mistake".

The Japanese newspaper emphasized President Mubarak's statement that the dialogue between Israel and the PLO, which has adopted a realistic policy since the PNC meeting last year, is indispensable for the sake of peace in the Middle East.

The paper also said that President Mubarak recalled that the PLO recognized the Israeli state's right to exist, proclaimed a Palestinian state to be established within the pre-1967 borders, and renounced terrorism.

President Mubarak said that Israel apparently fears that an international conference would force it to adopt certain decisions. He said the disputes obstructing Middle East peace must be resolved only through direct negotiations among the concerned parties. He declared that an international conference does not have the right to interfere in this matter. He explained that this means that an international conference is a guarantee for direct negotiations.

SANKEI SHIMBUN refers to President Mubarak's warning to the effect that if the PLO is disregarded, then several new terrorist groups might emerge to attack the pro-Israeli forces in Europe and elsewhere.

NIKON KEIZAI SHIMBUN publishes a picture of President Mubarak and writes that President Mubarak, during a press conference on peace in the Middle East, voiced hopes that the international conference will convene this year, and that the conference does not conflict with direct negotiations.

The paper concentrates on Mubarak's statement in which he said: I want to avoid a comparison between the policy of President Bush's government on the Middle East and that of the previous government because the Bush government has been in existence for only 1 month. I believe there needs to be some time to study and understand the situation before making any moves.

NIKON KEIZAI SHIMBUN refers to the meeting between President Mubarak and U.S. President George Bush and to Mubarak's statement that it was a short meeting during which they discussed several principles.

The paper also refers to the meeting which was held between President Mubarak and French President Francois Mitterrand in Tokyo yesterday. It points out that the Egyptian and French Presidents emphasize that Israel's objection is an obstacle in the way of convening the international conference for peace.

The paper quotes sources of the Egyptian and French delegations who affirmed the identity of views of their countries, particularly regarding the need to reach a solution to the Middle East problem and the international conference for peace with the five permanent members of the Security Council as participants. It also quotes these sources as saying that the two countries agree that there are still major difficulties obstructing the convening of the international conference because of Israel's strong opposition.

NIKON KEIZAI SHIMBUN says that President Mitterrand expressed his readiness to meet with Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat this year and that he told President Mubarak that he sensed that the United States now tends to influence the Israeli stand.

The paper also discusses the meeting which took place between President Mubarak and King Husayn of Jordan. It says that King Husayn is a moderate Arab leader like President Mubarak, and that there is great understanding and cooperation between the two presidents.

YOMIURI SHIMBUN says that the world leaders discussed diplomatic actions with the funeral of the late Japanese Emperor Hirohito as the backdrop in what is termed as the diplomacy of consolation [diplumasiyat al-muwasah]. The paper discusses in particular the meetings and contacts which President Mubarak held with several world leaders to discuss the Middle East issue, foremost U.S. President Bush, French President Mitterrand, King Husayn of Jordan, and Japanese Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita.

ASAHI SHIMBUN says that during their discussions in Tokyo, President Mubarak and King Husayn focused on the question of strengthening the new Arab Economic Council and on the method of joint coordiantion between Egypt and Jordan to establish peace in the Middle East.

Quoting informed sources, the paper says that during his meeting with the Egyptian president, King Husayn pointed out that the PLO again requested the development of cooperation with Jordan, and that he respects the Palestinian desire.

According to the Japanese paper, the Jordanian monarch expressed his belief that it is possible to find a forum for the international conference which would facilitate the U.S. participation by forming a joint Arab delegation in which the Palestinians and Jordan will participate.

The paper also points out that King Husayn expressed hope that the current atmosphere of international detente between Moscow and Washington will encourage the Middle East peace process.

Interior Minister on Arrest of Drug Traffickers

NC2702175289 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1429 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Cairo, 27 Feb (MENA)—Teams from the Interior Ministry have seized approximately 6 tons of hashish that drug traffickers were attempting to smuggle in a truck on the Qina-Safajah Road, according to Interior Minister Zaki Badr's statement before the Shura Council today.

He added that the drug dealders, who were arrested 2 nights ago after an 8-month surveillance, had been operating on Sudanese territory and from there had used dirt and other roads to smuggle the drugs into Egypt. The ringleader, named Sayyid 'Abd al-Tawwab 'Abd al-Samad, was arrested in his house in Nasr City for possessing 128 bags of hashish, Minister Badr disclosed. A Sudanese national possessing 8 bags of hashish and an Egyptian named Samir Najib 'Abdallah with 12 bags of hashish were arrested along with the ringleader. The Sudanese trafficker's wife, named Hana' 'Abd al-Hamid 'Abd al-'Azim, was also taken into custody for possessing 40 bags of hashish. A truck, a BMW, a Mercedes, and a Peugeot were seized with the gang members, in addition to 993,000 Egyptian pounds.

The interior minister added that 2 more tons of hashish were seized early this morning after being found in a cache in the Al-Khatatibah, al-Buhayrah governorate, thus bringing to 8 tons the total quantity of hashish seized so far. Six automatic weapons were also found, he added. Minister Badr added that large quantities of subsidized medicines had been seized with the gangsters, who planned to smuggle them into Sudan.

Minister Badr said that this ring is one of the biggest ever uncovered and that the quantity of drugs seized represents between 50 and 60 percent of drug consumption in Egypt.

Major General 'Abd al-Wahid Isma'il, first assistant to the interior minister and chief of the drug-combatting dcepartment, is scheduled to hold a news conference tomorrow to give more details on this case.

'Arafat Winds Up Cairo Visit, Departs 26 Feb

NC2602205989 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2045 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Excerpt] Cairo, 26 Feb (MENA)—PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat left Cairo for Tunis at the end of a 1-day visit to Egypt, during which he held talks with Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, dealing with the latest developments in the area. [passage omitted]

Libya

Trade Protocol With Tunisia Signed 23 Feb

LD2402192789 Tripoli JANA in English 0820 GMT 23 Feb 89

[Text] Tunis, Al Nawwar [February] 23, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—A protocol was concluded in Tunis yesterday of the special committee in the industry sector between great Jamahiriyah and sisterly Tunisia.

It was signed by the secretary of the General People's Committee for Industry and Mr Moncef Belaid, minister of industry and commerce in sisterly Tunisia. The protocol asserts the merger of some companies operating in the industrial sector in the two sisterly countries, apart from having joint administration for some of the operational companies in this field, not to mention the establishment of the Supreme Council for Industrial Research comprising the Industrial Research Centre in great Jamahiriyah and the Agency for Advancing Industry in sisterly Tunisia.

An agreement has been reached on integration, cooperation and coordination between a number of other industrial companies. The above committee, in its meetings held for the period 20-22 February, discussed the drawing up of industrial strategy for the two sisterly countries in connection with one of the following means:

-full merger for a number of existing industrial companies.

-establishing supreme administration for the similar industrial companies.

-achieving cooperation between the private sector and the industrial companies in establishing joint factories.

PRC Official Arrives on Visit 24 Feb

LD2502095489 Tripoli JANA in English 0807 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] Tripoli, Al Nawwar 25 [25 February], JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—Wang Rolin, the deputy minister for minerals in the People's Republic of China, and the delegation in his company arrived yesterday in Tripoli on a visit to great Jamahiriyah.

Wang Rolin expressed, in a statement to JANA, his pleasure and that of the delegation in his company for visiting great Jamahiriyah and asserted that his visit was aimed at strengthening and consolidating relations of friendship and cooperation between the Libyan Arab people and the Chinese people in various fields.

Chadian Minister Departs Tripoli 26 Feb

LD2602174589 Tripoli JANA in English 1650 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] Tripoli, Al-Nawwar [February] 26, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The Chadian minister for information and civic orientation, Adoum Moussa Seif, left this afternoon Tripoli after a visit to great Jamahiriyah.

Sudan

AFP: Military High Command Remains on Alert

NC2702123689 Paris AFP in English 1214 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Cairo, Feb 27 (AFP)—Troops manned all roads into the Sudanese capital Khartoum Monday, searching each vehicle carefully for arms. Diplomatic sources here said the military high command was on the alert in case supporters of Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi in the powerful Ansar politico-religious sect and militants of the fundamentalist National Islamic Front combined to put on a show of force.

Senior military officers headed by Army chief General Fathi Ahmad 'Ali gave Mr. al-Mahdi an ultimatum a week ago to set up a government of national salvation. Its priority would be to end the five-year civil war in the south.

Mr. al-Mahdi was expected to comply. His Ummah Party said at the weekend it would ask other groups represented in parliament to join the government and the cabinet said it agreed to enlarging the government's base.

Major groupings based in the Arab Moslem north welcomed the cabinet decision, except for the Islamic Front, Mr. al-Mahdi's coalition partner in government.

Army 'Not Aiming' at Overthrow

EA2702162589 Khartoum SUNA in English 1030 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Khartoum, 27 February—The Armed Forces have confirmed that their current moves are not aiming at overthrowing the political system in the country. This came in a meeting held yesterday by the Army leadership in the capital to discuss the response by the premier to the memo that they submitted earlier to him on the development in security and political scene, the daily newspaper "AL-AYYAM" of today reported.

The Army leaders decided to delay their final decision on Al-Mahdi's response until the holding of today's session during which the premier will address the Assembly on the recent political developments, including the Army memo, the paper said.

The meeting decided to intensify the guard around the cities' entrances, airports and check-up points and to keep alert into 50 per cent. [as received]

Reportage on Al-Mahdi Response to Army Memo

Threatens Resignation

NC2702144489 Paris AFP in English 1429 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Khartoum, Feb 27 (AFP)—Sudan's embattled Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi Monday asked the military to give him a commitment by next Sunday that it would refrain from mounting a coup. Otherwise he would resign, he told the Constituent Assembly (parliament).

He was speaking as a week's ultimatum to him from senior officers headed by Army chief General Fathi Ahmad 'Ali expired. The military ultimatum was that he should form a government of national salvation, its priority being to end the civil war wracking the south of the country since 1983.

Mr. al-Mahdi told parliament that he would provide the military with new equipment and weapons, including aircraft, tanks, rocket launchers, long-range artillery, a complete anti-aircraft system, minesweepers and launches. He did not say where this materiel would come from.

Troops manned all roads into the capital Monday, searching each vehicle carefully for arms. Diplomatic sources said the military high command was on the alert in case Mr. al-Mahdi's backers in the powerful Ansar politico-religious sect and militants of the fundamentalist National Islamic Front (NIF) combined to put on a show of force.

At the weekend, the cabinet said it agreed to enlarging the government's base, and Mr. al-Mahdi's Ummah Party said it would ask other groups represented in parliament to join the Ummah-NIF dominated coalition.

Major groupings based in the Arab Moslem north welcomed the cabinet move, except for the Front. Mr. al-Mahdi's Ummah and the Front have a comfortable majority in parliament at the moment.

In a separate statement, legal parties from the mainly Christian and animist African south also called for formation of a new broadly-based government, and said the Armed Forces should have a place in it.

Mr. al-Mahdi told parliament he was also asking the trade unions to promise this week not to take to the streets nor to go on strike as they did at the end of December.

Meanwhile Monday, the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) announced that it had taken the strategic southern garrison town of Torit, on SPLA radio monitored in Nairobi.

Further on Al-Mahdi Statement

NC2702164789 Cairo MENA in English 1644 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Khartoum, Feb 27 (MENA)—Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi today threatened the Constituent Assembly to resign next Sunday [5 March] in case the Assembly does not approve his statement made to the Assembly earlier today.

In the statement he listed the achievements of the present government and pointed out to the response he gets from the Armed Forces. He called on the Armed Forces to maintain the constitutional legitimacy as a national vehicle that has a disciplinary function.

He affirmed in his statement that the Armed Forces will receive shortly modern weapons, aircraft and tanks that are due to reach here in several days' time from some friendly countries. He addressed thanks to Japan, China, the Netherlands and Italy. He termed as a healthy phenomenon the Armed Forces memorandum.

Meanwhile, the Armed Forces General Command has been in session since 10 a.m. to review the present situation in the light of the reply of the prime minister to their memo.

SUNA Notes Statement

EA2702181989 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1425 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Excerpt] Khartoum, 27 February—The prime minister, Mr al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, announced in the Constituent Assembly today that he would offer his resignation as prime minister next Sunday [5 March] unless he receives an assurance from the Armed Forces that they are committed to constitutional legitimacy and that all outstanding questions relating to them will be dealt with through the National Defense Council. [passage omitted]

More Equipment Promised

EA2702182489 Khartoum National Unity Radio in Arabic 1400 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Excerpts] Mr al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, the chairman of the Council of Ministers, today delivered a statement in the Constituent Assembly in which he spoke about the current political situation in the country. [passage omitted]

He said that the issue of peace had gotten mixed up with well-known regional complications. Because of (?explosive demands) and the expenditure on war, we have not managed to contain inflation or prevent price rises, he said.

His excellency spoke about defense commitments and announced a four-point plan to provide our Armed Forces with solid backup. He added: Our efforts to support the Armed Forces have succeeded, because advanced equipment, such as aircraft, tanks, missile launchers, armored troop carriers, minesweepers, gunboats, and a full air defense system, is on its way to us. All these are resources which our Armed Forces deserve. [passage omitted]

Radio SPLA Claims Rebels Seize Torit 26 Feb

LD2702134389 (Clandestine) Radio of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army in English 1300 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] The gallant forces of "Bright Star" campaign yesterday, 26 February 1989, captured the vitally strategic and historical town of Torit, the capital of Eastern Equatoria Province. After 2 days of tactical fighting and a final 9 hours of very heavy fighting, the enemy was taken by complete surprise in a strong, sustained attack and it was forced to abandon the garrison at 0500 hours sudan local time [0300 GMT].

SPLA Radio on 'Victory'

EA2702183989 (Clandestine) Radio of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army in English 1300 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] The remnants of Torit, including the commander, Brigadier General PSC [passed state college] al-Fadhil 'Umar al-Busharah, have fled towards Uganda and are being pursued. Others are scattered in the villages and are being rounded up. Others have been taken prisoner, including a major and the commissioner of eastern Equatoria Province, retired Colonel John (Okwahi).

A great amount of armaments, including tanks, heavy field artillery, including ballistic missiles, ballistic missile launchers, and many pieces of heavy machineguns and rocket-propelled grenades, were abandoned in good condition. More than 100 vehicles in good working condition were abandoned. This is obviously the biggest SPLA victory to date and is another big political earthquake for the shaky two-man family government of Sadiq and Turabi, his brother-in-law.

Torit is the fourth heavily defended Army headquarters garrison in the south following Juba, Wau, and Malakal. It was the headquarters of the 11th Infantry Brigade and many units were attached to this brigade in Khartoum's futile attempts to recapture lost garrisons in eastern Equatoria. The total force that has been dispersed in Torit was over 2,000 men heavily armed and deeply entrenched. This is a very heavy military and political blow to the Sadiq-Turabi government and their hangers-on.

Torit fell exactly 30 days after the fall of Nasir, the capital of Sobat Province in Upper Nile. It is to be recalled that SPLA forces of the "Unity" campaign overran Nasir on 26 January 1989, while Torit fell to the "Bright Star" campaign yesterday, 26 February 1989. With the fall of Nasir and now Torit, the SPLA has definitely taken the strategic initiative and is on the march.

Warning number one: the "Bright Star" campaign commander here gives the strongest of warnings to the isolated garrisons of Farajok and Nimule that have been (?cut off) to the south to either join the SPLA or evacuate within 72 hours. This warning goes in effect as of 3 pm [1300 GMT] of today, 27 February 1989, and must be taken very seriously. If Juba and Khartoum could not rescue Torit, how can they save Farajok and Nimule? This warning is serious.

Warning number two: The "Bright Star" campaign commander here gives the strongest of warnings to the isolated garrisons of Mongalla, Jummayzah, and Bor that have been cut [off] to the north to either join the SPLA or evacuate within 7 days. This warning goes in effect as of 3 pm today, 27 February 1989, and must be taken with dead seriousness. If Juba and Khartoum could not save Torit, they certainly cannot save Mongalla, Jummayzah, and Bor. Again, this warning is serious.

Warning number three: Foreign nationals who are in Juba for one reason or another are given 48 hours to leave Juba if they so wish, as the next logical target of the SPLA is Juba. Civilians are advised to go behind SPLA lines at Jabal Lado, Rejaf West, Jabal Kujur, or east of the river. Those who are unable to do so are advised to move away from military targets. SPLA cells inside Juba town are ordered to step up their activities to the maximum.

Warning number four: The enemy convoy that left Juba 4 days ago, codenamed Al-Sayf al-Batir or the Sharp Cutting Sword, is here warned to withdraw peacefully back to Juba. Otherwise, like the Ibn al-Walid convoy, you will be destroyed within 24 hours. With Liria and Torit in the SPLA's hands, the so-called Al-Sayf al-Batir is a rescue to nowhere. This force is now completely encircled and has not gone beyond 20 km from Juba. In military terms, their mission has been terminated by the capture of Torit and they have no option but to return. Otherwise, they commit suicide.

Garang Congratulates Fighters

EA2702211489 (Clandestine) Radio of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army in English 1330 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Statement by SPLA leader Colonel John Garang; date, place not given—live or recorded]

[Text] I seize the opportunity to extend my revolutionary greetings and appreciation to each and every SPLA soldier in the field of combat who, under very difficult conditions, has been and is scoring giant convincing victories one after the other against the various governments of exploiters and oppressors. Half naked, barefooted, hungry, thirsty, and confronted by a swarm of many other due hardships, the SPLA soldier has proved to the whole world that the trappings of life can never sway him from the cause of the people and the justice of their struggle.

The SPLA soldier has once again validated the age-old human experience concerning the infiniteness of the capacity of human resilience and resolve against challenges to dignity and justice. Again, to the SPLA soldier, wherever you are, whatever you are doing now, whether you are in action or in camouflage, however you are challenged, however you feel, whatever your present condition, I salute and congratulate you, the SPLA soldier. for your heroic sacrifices and steadfastness in pursuit of your single-minded objective to build a new Sudan.

MENA on Fall of Torit

NC2802094189 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0920 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Khartoum, 28 Feb (MENA)—The Sudanese forces evacuated the town of Torit yesterday following fierce fighting and a siege that had lasted since July 1988. Torit is the second largest military garrison town in the Equatoria Province after Juba and used to house 1,500 officers and soldiers.

Communications between Juba and Torit were lost 3 days ago as fighting intensified with the rebel forces, who are using modern and advanced weapons.

The newspaper AL-AYYAM today quoted a military source as saying that the circumstances surrounding the force present in Torit, the continuing siege of the town for 8 months, and the lack of supplies led to the fall of the town.

Gunmen Fire on State Council Chairman's House

EA2702180789 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1425 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Khartoum, 27 February—An armed [word indistinct] fired at the house of Ahmad al-Mirghani, chairman of the State Council this morning. Al-Mirghani's bodyguards answered fire from the house. Four suspects driving a pick-up vehicle have been arrested. A committee has been formed to investigate the mysterious incident. Later SUNA will carry a statement issued today by Sudan Police headquarters.

More on Attack

EA2702205289 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1425 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] 27 February—In the early hours of this morning, at about 0215, a station wagon with four passengers aboard moved along the street to the east of the house of Ahmad al-Mirghani, chairman of the State Council, heading south, and when it (?passed) his excellency's house it turned east into the street between the mosque and people's schools whereupon shots emanated from the vehicle directed against the wall of the State Council chairman's house in the direction of the policemen guarding the house. The guards returned the fire. The vehicle escaped without being hit.

Police vehicles stationed at points nearby immediately sped toward the source of the firing and started circling the area and blocking the roads without, however, arresting any of the criminals.

Following this, the police chief of the national capital, the chief of central investigations, the Khartoum area police chief, and criminologists went to the scene and found the places where two bullets had struck the wall near the eastern gate of the house. Further police investigations followed. [Passage indistinct] formation [word indistinct] to investigate the accused persons headed by a colonel of the national capital police and two officers of the central investigations branch to stand [word indistinct] to investigate the circumstances of the incident and hunt down those responsible for it.

MENA Report

NC2702181289 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1744 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Khartoum, 27 Feb (MENA)—An armed group fired at the home of Sudanese State Council Chairman Ahmad al-Mirghani this morning. The personnel guarding the house returned the fire and four people riding in a pickup truck have been detained. A committee has been set up to investigate the incident. A statement also has been issued, saying that in the early hours of today, a pickup truck carrying four passengers drove past a street east of the home of Ahmad al-Mirghani heading south. It then turned east toward the street and opened fire at the house and in the direction of the police guards. The guards returned the fire at the pickup truck, which left the scene without being hit.

Immediately afterwards, police vehicles parked in fixed posts nearby drove toward the sound of the gunfire, surrounded the area, and closed the roads, but did not apprehend the criminals. The Khartoum police director, the Central Investigation Department director, the area police director, and criminal investigation specialists went to the scene of the shooting. They found two bullets near the eastern entrance of the house. The police then received information that led to the arrest of three [number as received] individuals and to the pickup truck believed to have been involved in the incident.

An investigative team has been formed under the direction of a Khartoum Police colonel and two members from the Central Investigation and Internal Security Departments to interrogate the defendants, learn the implications of the incident, and determine their goal.

Tunisia

'Arafat Meets With Ben Ali, Makes Statement

LD2102160789 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 1300 GMT 21 Feb 89

[Excerpt] President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali received Mr Yasir 'Arafat and PLO representative Mr Hakam Bal'awi, at the presidential palace in Carthage this morning.

The PLO chairman gave this statement:

[Begin 'Arafat recording] I am pleased with this good meeting, which took place this morning with the president. I conveyed to him, in the name of all the members of the PLO Executive Committee, in the name of the Palestinian people, and in the name of the people of the uprising, our warm congratulations for this successful Maghreb summit, which we the Palestinians consider as [word indistinct] for the whole Arab position, [word indistinct] for the Arab position in the East and [word indistinct] for the whole Arab position.

I thanked the president this [word indistinct]. Starting from this we consider ourselves [word indistinct] state, but we consider ourselves as an integrated part of this Maghreb Union.

At the same time I thanked the president for the Tunisian position and the Tunisian people's position and for this warm embrace of the Palestinian cause and the PLO. [passage omitted]

Islamic Movement Requests Political Party Status

*PM2402154489 Paris LE MONDE in French
19-20 Feb 89 p 3*

[Michel Deure dispatch: "Muslims Have Asked for Permission To Form a Party"]

[Text] Tunis—The Tunisian Islamic movement has just applied for permission from the authorities to form a political party. The law on parties bans any reference "to religion, race, language, or a region," and the Islamic Tendency Movement has become the Party of Renewal. The government has 4 months in which to officially recognize its existence.

If it refuses, will the Islamic movement, which has been coming out into the open for several months, fall back into the clandestine existence in which is was formed and in which it has developed for about 10 years?

In an interview with LE MONDE, Rached Ghannouchi, the 48-year old Muslim leader and philosophy professor who was sentenced to death by former President Bourguiba, refused to envisage such an eventuality.

"There can be no democracy without us," he said. "It is in the interest of the democratic process to legalize our party, which already exists. Moreover, we think that the government is fully convinced of this fact. In any event, we will continue our efforts to persuade everybody that Tunisia's higher interests make it necessary to settle our position so that we can participate in developing our country within the framework of the law."

In the immediate future, the Party of Renewal will work to set up new structures, because the former Islamic Tendency Movement's structures were dismantled during the repression in 1986 and 1987, and to prepare for its first congress. But it is also interested in the parliamentary elections on 2 April, in which it plans to play a part in one way or another.

If the party is not recognized before then, it will not be able to participate in the election as a party, and its main leaders, headed by Mr Ghannouchi, will not be able to stand as candidates even on an individual basis if they do not regain their civic rights, of which they have been deprived since they were found guilty in September 1987 by the State Security Court, which has since been dismantled.

But members who conform to the legal requirements will still be able to form "independent" lists or to be included on "national coalition" lists grouping all the recognized political movements, in accordance with an idea put forward by Mr Ben Ali.

Mr Ghannouchi nonetheless stated categorically: "We are making preparations with our members. The success of the democratic experiment requires our presence in this election so that we can be represented in the legal bodies. Our absence would certainly not weaken us, but it would cast doubt on the whole democratic process in the eyes of Tunisian and foreign opinion."

The Islamic movement, which welcomed Mr Ben Ali's accession to power, thinks that the actions taken by the head of state over the past 16 months are "positive," notably the release of political prisoners, the legalization of new parties and student associations (one of which is Islamic), the current normalization of trade union life, early parliamentary elections and, of course, the measures taken to promote "the country's Arab and Muslim identity."

When it is pointed out to Mr Ghannouchi that political circles are saying that these measures are also tending to "pull the rug out from under his feet" and steal some of his supporters, he smiled and although he did not claim that they are helping him, he stressed:

"The defense of Islam is not anybody's prerogative and we do not want to make any accusations. But even if there are ulterior motives, the essential thing for us is that these measures should serve Islam's cause."

A Reassuring Image

On the other hand, Mr Ghannouchi echoed the criticism expressed within the opposition about the press code and the law on parties, both of which are deemed too restrictive, and about the electoral code which imposes drastic conditions on candidates.

He also emphasized the recent promulgation of a law on mosques which, according to him, "turns them into veritable government departments," and he particularly deplored the fact that all cultural activity (lectures, which he regularly gave in the past) is banned in mosques unless prior permission is obtained. This law, the leader said, has prompted thousands of letters of protest to be sent to the president's office.

Mr Ghannouchi, who seems anxious not to clash with the government head-on because of the legislation and to put forward a reassuring image to all those who are worried by these activities, preferred to be very vague about his party's future program.

"While emphasizing the importance of our national Arab and Islamic identity, we do not disregard the need to have cultural exchanges with the West, based on mutual respect for the specific characteristics of our civilizations and rejecting all kinds of hegemony or isolation. In addition, the relations which bind our country to Europe are a real and historical fact which cannot be disregarded."

And to show his desire for "dialogue" and his spirit of "openness to the world" more effectively, Mr Ghannouchi went so far as to admit that Tunisia "in the age of progress and satellites," should be able to receive French television directly.

However, he remains firm on one point. The weekly day of rest, which is at present Sunday, must be replaced by Friday. Disregarding the economic problems that such a change would produce and echoing statements previously made in his lectures in the mosques, he pointed out:

"For Jews Saturday is holy. For Christians it is Sunday. Why should we not keep Friday holy? For man, who is not an animal, religious and cultural traditions must come first."

Kuwait

Foreign Minister on Lebanon Mediation Efforts

PM2402143089 Jeddah 'UKAZ in Arabic
17 Feb 89 p 3

[Interview with Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, by chief editors of the Saudi papers in Kuwait on 16 February]

[Text] [Question] After the first round of talks and before the second round to be held in Kuwait next Sunday, what is the view of the six-member committee headed by you regarding a solution [to the Lebanese problem]?

[Al-Sabah] First, I want everyone to pray for our success in these endeavors because I personally do not believe that a fierce 14-year war can end merely by forming a committee at any level. But this does not mean that I am not optimistic about the possibility of reaching an acceptable formula for reconciling the Lebanese groups and ending the tragedy.

Second, as you know, we met first in Tunis with Salim al-Huss, Husayn al-Husayni, and Michel 'Awn separately, as we failed to bring them together face-to-face for protocol reasons that they were anxious not to ignore. We had to ask them individually about their positions. Then we recorded these positions and began to discuss them. Nevertheless, I still maintain that the task is difficult and constant efforts are required to overcome all the severe problems hindering a solution.

[Question] What are the most notable of these problems?

[Al-Sabah] We do not want to dwell on all the problems, because at this stage we are trying to overcome the obstacles and secure major common denominators based on trust among the various groups. Nevertheless I am still optimistic about the possibility of achieving a solution. My brother committee members and I have sensed a real desire on everyone's part to extricate Lebanon from its predicament.

[Question] If this is their desire, why has no result yet been reached?

[Al-Sabah] As I told you, destruction, tragedies, interference, complications, intervention, and various other vested interests constitute an obstacle to an early solution. Lebanon is dominated by several different outlooks and subject to complex conditions and the task of overcoming all this is not easy.

[Question] Could it be said that the next round of talks with the Lebanese religious figures will impart a real impetus to these endeavors? Will these elements be effective in reaching a settlement?

[Al-Sabah] One of the committee's objectives is to examine all potential solutions. And we realize that all Lebanese are parties to any settlement. The solution must emanate from them. We are nothing more than a helping factor trying to bring viewpoints closer. We have presented them with all the previous settlement plans. We have summarized stances, events, and development and come out with an overview on which we hope everyone will agree.

The religious elements in Lebanon are now asking to participate effectively in boosting the committee's efforts and containing the problems that have led to that dangerous political vacuum in Lebanon.

The problem of Patriarch Sfayr's participation has finally been overcome. He will be with us in Kuwait. We hope that these religious elements will further understand the committee's motives. We feel that everyone is satisfied with the committee and its objectives as it is formed by all the Arabs and represents everyone's will.

[Question] So there will be a third round of meetings. What will the forum be?

[Al-Sabah] Yes, there will be a third round of contacts with politicians and militia elements. I personally am ready to meet with them in Kuwait, Lebanon, or anywhere else, because we believe it is urgently essential to explore the viewpoints of all the Lebanese parties in order to determine an ideal solution and also because we are convinced that a solution must, as I said earlier, emanate from all parties.

[Question] Does this reflect your conviction that it is the Lebanese alone who can reach such a formula?

[Al-Sabah] We are not concerned about any foreign parties. We are concerned about meeting with the Lebanese and securing a final formula for a settlement in light of their stances and views.

True we are aware of foreign complications, but we are also aware of the fact that the Lebanese, in cooperation with the six-member committee, can achieve the success required of these endeavors.

However, this does not imply a complete disregard of foreign conditions on our part. We are convinced that conditions at present are better than ever before for dealing with the Lebanese themselves in a direction that would restore Lebanon's security and stability. Many foreign settlements and solutions were tried, but they all proved that imposing or formulating a foreign settlement cannot work. This was probably one of the factors that convinced the Arab committee of the need for such meetings.

[Question] But what exactly is required of the militias?

[Al-Sabah] They, like the various influential Lebanese elements and forces, are required to do a lot. We know that these militias can play a clear role at various stages. They can contribute effectively to perpetuating security and stability. They can also participate in defining the desired formula, determining Lebanon's future, and guaranteeing its stability.

[Question] What are you demanding from politicians?

[Al-Sabah] We are demanding nothing. All we want is cooperation from all parties. We are working to explore all parties' views and to exchange views with everyone for the sake of Lebanon's future. We are confident that in Lebanon there are men and highly competent figures capable of securing its independence and maintaining its stability.

[Question] Has the committee proposed a solution formula?

[Al-Sabah] Our first objective is to fill the constitutional vacuum, secure agreement on the next Lebanese president, begin to form a government, and hold parliamentary elections. So we want all parties to reach an understanding in order to work together to reach a suitable formula.

Every party must offer sufficient concessions for the sake of Lebanon. It is not in anyone's interest for matters to remain as they are. Nor is it in Lebanon's interests to remain torn by crises and tormented by problems any longer.

[Question] What if the committee fails to secure a formula? What would happen?

[Al-Sabah] We still hope that we will not reach an impasse. We believe everyone knows that he must do something and abandon some of his convictions. But if we fail to secure a final formula we will have no option but to refer the matter to the ministerial council and present it with all the facts and information. It will then have the right to decide what it believes is in Lebanon's interests. But I hope we will not reach an impasse because the future will be dark and unclear if the committee fails to achieve a solution acceptable to all Lebanese parties.

[Question] Your Excellency Shaykh Sabah, what is your opinion of other developments in the region and what is being done about the meetings of a quadripartite Arab grouping?

[Al-Sabah] We in Kuwait are for any Arab grouping that would serve pan-Arab interests, though we cannot form a final opinion of that grouping before any statements or resolutions are issued in this regard. Let us follow events, then we will express our opinion of the subject. All we have heard so far is that the grouping has been established for economic purposes. But a judgment or an opinion of what is being reported cannot be made at present. All we want is to satisfy our peoples' aspirations and to enhance our common action and building capability in whatever steps we take.

Saudi Arabia

Islamic Jurisprudence Reviews Rushdie Book

LD2702225789 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1820 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Mecca, 27 Feb (SPA)—His Excellency Dr Abdullah 'Umar Nasif, secretary general of the Islamic World League and deputy chairman of the [Islamic] Jurisprudence Council, stated that the council looked into various paragraphs and chapters of the novel written by Salman Rushdie through a translation by two translators who are experts in both English and Arabic.

The council saw the most repugnant and dirtiest picture of lies and loathsome attributes which this writer used to describe the prophet of Islam, our master Muhammad, the prophet of God, God's prayers and peace upon him, as well as his wives, and the mothers of believers, with the most revulsive attributes.

Likewise, his book contains affronts and assaults on Islamic creeds and eminent figures, to the extent that he attacked the close friend of God, our master Ibrahim, the father of the prophets, prayers and peace be upon him, describing him with offensive attributes that havenothing to do with historical, scientific, or literary research. Rather, they constitute an infringement on the Islamic faith sanctities in a scandalous manner quite unprecedented in the verbal assault. They constitute crimes which are punishable in any country ruled by a system, constitution, and laws that protect rights and dignity. Because the contents of this novel goes beyond freedom of opinion and comes in the context of the crime of assault and causes damage by using vile language which infringes on respectable and virtuous dignities, it does not deserve to be confronted with a scholarly response.

The deputy chairman of the jurisprudence council has pointed out that the decision says that this individual must be pursued with a penal legal action and that it will be instituted against him and against the publishing house that published this novel. The Islamic Conference Organization, which represents the Islamic nation, will pursue this action in competent courts.

His excellency further said that in its decision, the council has affirmed that the apology offered by this writer to British quarters and published by newspapers, to the effect that he regretted having offended the feelings of Muslims, is an empty apology that does not change his criminal slander. In a case like this an apology must contain admission and recognition that what he said in his book is pure lies and slander. This must be published in the news media similarly as his lies were published.

Concluding his statement, Dr Nasif underlined that the council's decision called upon the governments, peoples, and individuals in Islamic and other countries to completely boycott the publishing houses that have published this book called "The Satanic Verses," helped in its publication, paid rewards to its author, or offered him a prize. The council urges that they not deal with the publishing houses in any form.

King Fahd Holds Talks With Iraq's Ramadan

JN2502153489 Baghdad INA in English 1515 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] Riyadh, Feb. 25, INA—Personal envoy of President Saddam Husayn to Saudi King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, Mr. Taha Yasin Ramadan, first deputy premier today conveyed a message dealing with bilateral relations. An Iraqi source said the message contained Iraq's satisfaction and pride over brotherly relations binding Iraq and Saudi Arabia and affirming Iraq's concern on boosting these relations in all fields in service of joint Arab action.

During a meeting here today with the Saudi monarch, Mr. Ramadan briefed King Fahd on developments in the Arab arena leading among which the founding of the Arab Cooperation Council stressing that the council enhances Arab effort and solidarity. Mr. Ramadan also acquainted the Saudi monarch with Iraq's attitude towards the Iraqi-Iranian negotiations stressing Iraq's commitment to its legitimate rights and the full text of Security Council Resolution 598 and rejection of any manipulation of its articles. Mr. Ramadan also affirmed Iraq's backing of the Palestine Arab people and their right in establishing their state. The Saudi monarch stressed the Saudi Kingdom's desire to continue and expand the developing relations with Iraq in all fields saying that the two countries' relations are exemplary.

King Fahd asked Mr. Ramadan to convey his greetings to President Saddam Husayn stressing at the same time appreciation over President Husayn's efforts in strengthening Arab solidarity and action. The Saudi monarch also expressed appreciation and blessing of the Saudi Kingdom on founding the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) between Iraq, Jordan, Egypt and the Yemen Arab Republic pointing out that the council would contribute to boosting joint Arab action.

U.S. Stand on Palestinians 'Incomprehensible'

JN2102114489 Al-Dammam AL-YAWM in Arabic 19 Feb 89 p 3

[Editorial: "Unclear Stand"]

[Text] The U.S. stand toward the Palestinian question is unclear and incomprehensible. The United States yesterday vetoed a resolution condemning the Zionist terrorist practices against Palestinian citizens in the occupied Arab territories. A few days ago, in a State Department report, Washington condemned Israel's violations of human rights in the occupied territories, stressing that Israel is exercising the most repugnant kinds of torture against detainees in its prisons.

These two stands by Washington are incomprehensible. While Washington admits and condemns in an official report the inhumane practices of the occupation against the Arab citizens, it uses the veto to block international condemnation in the form of a UN resolution. The U.S. defense of this veto is as strange as its stand. Washington says that the UN condemnation is only directed against Israel, while the Palestinians in the occupied territories are carrying out acts that cannot be approved. Does Washington want the international community to condemn the Palestinian struggle against the occupation authorities? And does it deny them the right to resist the occupation?

We must then ask with what the Palestinians are resisting the occupation authorities. They are resisting with stones and incendiary bombs, which are the strongest weapons they possess, while Washington is providing Israel with all kinds of modern, destructive weapons. How can we compare Israel's stand to that of the Palestinians in the occupied Arab territories?

If we equate these two stands, we will be equating the slaughterer and the slaughtered. This can never be true because the slaughterer possesses all the means of death and the victim cannot escape. This is what Israel is currently doing. The U.S. veto raises questions on the objective of the U.S. State Department's report on the situation in the occupied Arab territories. It also raises many questions on the U.S. stand. Is it true that U.S. policy in the Middle East can be changed. And can we actually trust U.S. mediation in the Arab-Israeli conflict?

The U.S. position is vague and needs further clarification. The Arabs should strengthen the uprising to eliminate any ambiguities surrounding it and must do their best to make the American man on the street realize Israel's sadism. We must support the uprising materially, politically, and in the field of information until the Israelis change their stands inside the Zionist entity and exert pressure on their leaders to ask for a meeting with the PLO.

As Arabs, we must change the stands of American and Israeli public opinion so that the U.S. and Israeli Governments may be forced to grant the Palestinians their legitimate rights to self-determination and the establishment of their independent Palestinian state and recognize the PLO. This change of opinion will not take place without supporting the uprising, which has succeeded in changing the international community's stand on the Palestinian question and in making it a topical international issue.

President Receives Jordanian Prime Minister

JN2702134089 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1315 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Baghdad, 27 Feb (INA)—President Saddam Husayn received at noon today Zayd al-Rifa'i, prime minister of the fraternal Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Zayd al-Rifa'i conveyed to President Saddam Husayn the greetings of his brother, His Majesty King Husayn ibn Talal, and his wishes of continued good health for his excellency and constant prosperity and progress for the Iraqi people. During the meeting, they reviewed the strong fraternal relations between the two friendly countries as well as means to promote the welfare of both countries and the glorious Arab nation.

They also discussed Arab issues and other matters of mutual interest. President Saddam Husayn asked Zayd al-Rifa'i to convey his greetings to his brother, His Majesty King Husayn ibn Talal, and his wishes of continued progress for the fraternal Jordanian people. Taha Yasin Ramadan, Revolution Command Council [RCC], member and first deputy prime minister, attended the meeting.

Al-Rifa'i Departs 27 Feb

JN2702143489 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1412 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Baghdad, 27 Feb (INA)—Zayd al-Rifa'i, prime minister of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, left Baghdad this afternoon following a brief visit to Iraq. During his visit, Al-Rifa'i met with President Saddam Husayn and conveyed to him the greetings of his brother His Majesty King Husayn. Al-Rifa'i was seen off at the airport by Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister; and a number of senior Iraqi officials.

Japan's Uno Pledges Help To Rebuild Iraq

OW2702011489 Tokyo KYODO in English 0413 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 26 KYODO—Foreign Minister Sosuke Uno Sunday reiterated Japan's pledge to help Iraq rebuild when peace is reached between it and Iran, Japanese officials said.

Uno's pledge came during a 30-minute meeting with Iraqi Vice President Taha Muhyi al-Din Ma'ruf at the Foreign Ministry's Iikura Guesthouse.

Ma'ruf said he sought aid to help his country rebuild after the eight-year-old Gulf war.

Ma'ruf was quoted as telling Uno that Baghdad plans no territorial aggression against Iran and will continue peace talks with Tehran. Ma'ruf also called for Japanese cooperation in the Middle East peace process.

Uno said Japan expects Israel to join a proposed international peace conference to discuss ways to end the Israeli-Arab conflict.

RCC, Ba'th Party Discuss Shevardnadze Visit

JN2602135889 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1246 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] Baghdad, 26 Feb (INA)—President Saddam Husayn chaired a joint meeting of the RCC [Revolution Command Council] and the Ba'th Party Regional Command this morning. During the 3-hour meeting, they discussed the visit by Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister, to King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques. The participants expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the visit, which will bolster the close fraternal relations between the two countries and serve the Arab nation's interests in cooperation and solidarity.

The participants also discussed Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's visit to Iraq, and expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the visit and the talks, which will deepen the close cooperation and friendly relations between Iraq and the Soviet Union. The meeting also touched on a number of Arab issues, including agreements among Arab countries, in particular the Arab Cooperation Council [ACC] countries, by which they will refrain from interfering in each other's domestic affairs; end security and intelligence activities against each other; and undertake not to use force to solve problems among Arab countries.

These principles are in accordance with President leader Saddam Husayn's opening speech at the ACC's summit conference on 16 February. The meeting also dealt with preliminary ideas on these subjects and the competent authorities on each side were asked to prepare their plans.

In additon, the RCC set up a committee under RCC Vice Chairman 'Izzat Ibrahim to draw up a new constitution for the country. A committee under Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister, was formed to draw up a draft law to organize party life in the country in accordance with the trends and facts discussed by the RCC at several previous meetings. A further committee will be set up under Culture and Information Minister Latif Nusayyif Jasim to prepare a law governing the freedom of the press in the country.

IDF Confirms Raid on DFLP Target in Lebanon

TA2802104889 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1030 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] The IDF spokesman reports that air force planes attacked the DFLP headquarters southeast of Beirut this morning. All the planes returned safely and the targets were destroyed.

The target, which is situated east of the village of (Sil), served as a headquarters and a base from which organized raids were dispatched into the security zone and into Israel.

Sources Deny Hitting School

TA2802183789 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1800 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Military sources have said that the Israeli Air Force planes that operated today against Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine terrorist bases east of Beirut did not hit any nearby school. The Beirut police reported to Western correspondents that 26 students were wounded in the raid, 5 of them seriously. According to the military sources, however, the school is some 250 meters away from the targets that were bombarded. They say that the school was not hit, but some people could possibly have been wounded by shattered windows.

Release of 'Terrorists' for Soldier Demanded

TA2802081489 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0800 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] This morning, an unidentified person telephoned the Voice of Israel newsroom and announced on behalf of the organization, which he claims is holding IDF soldier Avi Sasportas, that his organization is demanding the release of 1,500 terrorists; otherwise the soldier will die.

The unidentified person, who spoke Hebrew with an Arabic accent, said that his organization is—in his words—sending a cassette. He did not specify further, answered no questions, and hung up at once.

Netanyahu Against Deal

TA2802164389 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1600 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said that the anonymous phone calls regarding the whereabouts of the missing soldier, Avi Sasportas, are an important source of intelligence information in the efforts to locate him. Netanyahu stressed, however, that Israel will not deliver jailed terrorists to any organization as part of an attempt to secure the missing soldier's release. Netanyahu said that this would be a mistake Israel cannot repeat. The deputy foreign minister made these statements in Tiberias in a talk with our correspondent Hayim Hecht.

Minister Shim'on Peres feels that the deal offered this morning concerning Sasportas cannot yet be regarded as serious, and any reaction to it would be premature. Peres made these statements to our correspondent Haviva Roger in Haifa.

Mitzna' Confirms 'Palestinian Arab Army' Exists

TA2802095089 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 28 Feb 89 p 1

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[Text] Major General 'Amram Mitzna', the commander of the IDF Central Command, yesterday told HA'ARETZ that "we are checking out every report [regarding missing soldier Avi Sasportas], as well as this specific report. We regard the information on the Palestinian Arab Army very seriously and are waiting for additional reports."

Maj Gen Mitzna' said that such an organization indeed exists in the territories. It is not a large organization, but it has been operating in the territories since the beginning of the uprising. "This is an organization similar to the shock committees that are operating in the territories, only in a different form." Asked what would happen if it transpires that the members of this organization are holding soldier Avi Sasportas and are demanding the release of terrorists imprisoned in Israel, Mitzna' said: "Everything in its time. First we must see if this organization is holding the soldier, then we will decide how to act."

Security sources told HA'ARETZ that this is an extremist organization that has been active in the territories for several months and is responsible for several attacks during the uprising.

In the wake of yesterday's anonymous report, the small-scale searches for the missing soldier have been stopped for several hours. Unless there is a development in the next 48 hours, the small-scale searches will be resumed.

Mitzna' on Group

TA2802114689 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] 'Amram Mitzna', commander of the IDF Central Command, says he knows nothing about the existence of the organization that claims to be holding soldier Avi Sasportas. General Mitzna' spoke with our correspondent 'Ido Shargil during his visit with a border policeman who was stabbed yesterday in Ramallah:

[Begin Mitzna' recording] We are getting reports all the time. Most of them, at least so far, have turned out to be nonsense and have not been serious. The more time passes, the greater the number of groups, organizations, and individuals who consider it a sport to disseminate various kinds of reports. At this point, we have nothing beyond what we have already reported. [end recording]

PLO Supporters Oppose Army

TA2702201589 Jerusalem Television Service in Hebrew 1900 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Our Arab affairs correspondent Ehud Ya'ari says that even during the initial stages of the uprising some activists in the territories had suggested trying to kidnap Israeli soldiers and settlers in order to negotiate a price for their release. Yasir 'Arafat had earlier banned such operations. The argument against these operations provided by the PLO leadership was that the activists in the territories did not have the means to properly secure and guard a hiding place to hold the kidnapped individual.

Our Arab affairs correspondent adds that the Popular Liberation Army [name as heard] is the arm which the PLO has for several months been trying to organize in the territories by grouping local youths in quasimilitary cells. This is actually an attempt to expand what came to be known at the time as the strike forces. The security forces have taken extensive measures to block the attempt to establish branches of the Popular Army in the villages and neighborhoods and, in general, their activity in this area has been successful. 'Arafat wanted the commander of Force 17, Abu al-Tayyib [Mahmud al-Natur], to be in charge of setting up the Popular Army in the territories, but the local activists expressed firm opposition to his leadership. Furthermore, many PLO supporters even object to the very idea of having the Popular Army, viewing it as an unnecessary adventure unsuitable to the circumstances.

'Blockade' Imposed on Territories for Elections

TA2702173289 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1700 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Because of the municipal elections and the national holiday scheduled for tomorrow, a blockade has been imposed on the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip, Judaea, and Samaria. Residents of the territories will be denied entry into or exit from Israel beginning tonight at midnight until 2200 tomorrow.

Polls Open in Elections

TA2802054389 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0500 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Excerpts] Some 4,000 polling stations are opening at this hour in 148 Israeli towns. Almost 1,200 lists are vying for the ballots of about 2,730,000 voters in the municipal elections. [Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 28 February in a report by Dan Izenberg on page 12 adds that 85 percent of the eligible voters are Jewish and 15 percent are Arab or Druze.] Any town in which the candidates fail to obtain at least 40 percent of the votes will hold another round on 14 March. [passage omitted]

The ballot boxes will be sealed at 2200 tonight, and the final results will be known after the soldiers' votes are counted tomorrow afternoon. [passage omitted]

Khalil al-Wazir Cousin Reelected Bar Chairman

TA2802111489 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 28 Feb 89 p 2

[ITIM report]

[Text] Gaza Strip lawyers yesterday held elections to the Gaza Bar Association. Attorney Fayiz Abu Rahmah, cousin of Abu Jihad [Khalil al-Wazir], 'Arafat's former deputy who was murdered in Tunis, was reelected chairman of the bar association.

In the past, 'Arafat nominated Abu Rahmah and East Jerusalem journalist Hanna Sinyurah as his two candidates to represent the inhabitants of the territories in negotiations with the Israeli Government.

Khan Yunus Attorney Khalid al-Qidra was elected as deputy chairman of the Gaza Bar Association, Attorney 'Adil Khalifa as secretary of the bar association, and Attorney Muhammad Dariwi as treasurer.

Three more attorneys were elected to the executive of the bar association: 'Abd al-Rahman Abu Nasir, Yusuf al-'Adasi, and Muhammad Frayj al-Hul.

The Gaza Strip attorneys are holding a prolonged strike. They started striking approximately 1 month after the outbreak of the uprising in protest against what they term the injustice done by the military courts to those accused of uprising related violations.

Shamir Rejects PLO, International Conference

TA2402192789 Jerusalem Television Service in Hebrew 1815 GMT 24 Feb 89

[News conference at Ben-Gurion Airport with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir upon his return from France "this afternoon"—videotaped]

[Text] [Israel television correspondent Dan Scemama] Mr Prime Minister, when you were in Paris, the Soviet foreign minister proposed in Cairo that a dialogue be held among the Middle East parties, leading to an international conference. He added that the PLO should participate in the international conference, for otherwise the USSR will not resume its relations with Israel. What is your reaction to this?

[Shamir] Well, we do not think that an international conference could serve the cause of peace. We believe in direct negotiations and do not think that the PLO should be a partner to negotiations over peace.

[Scemama] Sir, as far as the PLO is concerned, Faysal al-Husayni is holding contacts with Knesset members in Jerusalem; Abu Iyad [Salah Khalaf] sent a cassette to a peace symposium in Jerusalem; and 'Arafat convened a news conference with Israeli journalists in Cairo. All of them have made declarations in the style of 'Arafat's statements in Geneva. Do you not see a change in the PLO that calls for Israeli consideration?

[Shamir] This does not change the situation. The PLO has not changed its views, nor its attitude toward the people and State of Israel. All we hear from PLO figures are mainly remarks made for tactical purposes, in order to give a certain impression, in order to conceal rather than disclose intentions.

Notes 'Political Activity'

TA2402201889 Jerusalem Television Service in Arabic 1730 GMT 24 Feb 89

[News conference at Ben-Gurion Airport with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir upon his return from France "this afternoon"—videotaped in Hebrew with Arabic subtitles]

[Text] [Israel Arabic television correspondent Eli Nisan] Mr Prime Minister, intensive political contacts and meetings were held this past week in Cairo. What is your reaction to this new dynamism?

[Shamir] First, I would like to state firmly that there is dynamism, that there is intensive political activity aimed at bringing peace between Israel and the Arab world closer. All those talks and meetings you noted were held to this end. I hope that these talks as well as future, subsequent ones will promote the cause of peace.

[Nisan] Sir, in light of the recent Soviet moves in our region, do you think that the USSR has taken the political initiative in this region?

[Shamir] Well, it is difficult to accept such absolutist definitions. We have lately witnessed greater Soviet involvement. Only in the future will we be able to tell if this is an initiative, if these moves can decide or influence matters.

[Nisan] Sir, what role do you assign the Soviet Union, whose precondition is an international conference with PLO participation?

[Shamir] First, as long as the Soviet Union does not resume relations with Israel then, from our point of view, it cannot be involved in any peace process in the region. Besides, after it does so, if this is still its position, then we do not accept the international conference proposal because we believe that the best, in fact, the only way is that of direct negotiations.

[Nisan] In your meeting with Mitterrand, you raised some of your ideas for a settlement in the region. Now that you have heard the French position, will you have a consolidated plan by the time you leave for the United States?

[Shamir] I do not know whether that will be a consolidated plan, but I will take with me ideas and proposals which, taken in their entirety, may constitute a plan.

[Nisan] Before leaving for Paris, you said you were going to convince the French president of the justness of Israel's position. Have you, sir, returned more optimistic from your trip to Paris?

[Shamir] I usually return optimistic from my trips. Still, it is an illusion to think that in a single talk one can produce a magic formula and influence the French president to change his views. Nevertheless, I was glad to hear from him after our talk that I gave him things to think about.

Rabin Returns From Trip to London, Switzerland

TA2702211889 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 2100 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin returned to Israel this evening after a visit of several days to Switzerland and Britain. His visit there was on behalf of the Jewish National Fund. He was met at the airport by the chief of staff and the Defense Ministry director general.

Herzog Holds Meetings in Tokyo 24 Feb

TA2502113689 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1100 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] President Hayim Herzog, in Tokyo for the funeral of Emperor Hirohito, yesterday met with leaders of countries and delegations who arrived for the funeral. Our correspondent Rina Matzliah reports that President Herzog conferred with the Kenyan president and invited him for a visit to Israel. He also met with the heads of the Polish and Hungarian delegations, and with representatives of countries that do not maintain relations with Israel, such as the Indian president, the Chinese foreign minister, and the Nigerian president. President Herzog is slated to return home on Monday.

Eban Invited To Lecture in Moscow in Spring

TA2602092989 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 26 Feb 89 p A8

[Report by 'Ada Kohen]

[Text] Former Foreign Minister Abba Eban has been invited to visit Moscow in the spring to lecture on the situation in the Middle East and on Israeli-Soviet relations. The possibility that he might be invited was raised at the peace conference held last week in Jerusalem, and the formal invitation was given to him at his home on Friday afternoon by Radomir Bogdanov and Andrey Shumikhin, the two Soviet representatives who are visiting Israel.

Phone Links to China, USSR Mark 'Turning Point'

TA2802101589 Tel Aviv THE NATION in English 28 Feb 89 p 3

[Text] Direct phone lines with China will be established, and existing connections with the Soviet Union will be expanded, according to an announcement by the Ministry of Communications yesterday. Direct dialing via satellite will connect Israel with eight cities in China, including the main cities of Beijing and Shanghai. The changes reflect the "new direction in relations between Israel and China," said Minister of Communications Gad Ya'aqobi. As an additional "test to the thaw in relations with the Soviet Union," ten new lines will connect Israel and the Soviet Union, the Ministry reported.

The ten cities shortly to be in direct communication with Israel include Odessa, Minsk, Riga, Vilna, Bakav and Novosibirsk and bring the total number of Soviet cities available by telephone to 16. Direct phone linkage to the Soviet Union was first established in November 1988. Minister Ya'aqobi called the new linkages a "turning point" in Israel's relations with China and the Soviet Union.

Soviet Immigrant Charged With Giving PLO Secrets

TA2702100989 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 27 Feb 89 p 10

[Report by Mikha'el Rotem]

[Text] Tel Aviv—A disgruntled Soviet immigrant was charged yesterday in the local district court with giving secrets to the PLO and contact with a foreign agent.

Binyamin Sheinkman, 36, of Qiryat Bialik, was accused of telephoning PLO agents in Athens last summer and giving them details of his military service, the location of military bases, and names of army commanders. He reportedly told the PLO men that he was willing to give more information and meet with other PLO officials, the charge sheet said.

It also stated that he agreed to appear at a news conference in Tunisia where he was to have torn up his Israeli passport in front of the international media. Sheinkman reportedly asked the PLO for $1.5 million, which he did not receive.

The charge sheet states that Sheinkman immigrated to Israel in 1978. Two years later he was drafted for military service.

Shomron Sees Contradictions in USSR-Syria Ties

TA2102055789 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 0500 GMT 21 Feb 89

[Text] The chief of staff, General Dan Shomron, says he can discern contradictory signals in everything connected with Soviet influence over Syria. Speaking to military reporters last night, Gen Shomron said that on the one hand Moscow was exerting pressure on Damascus to hold back the arms race, and on the other hand was selling the Syrians sophisticated weaponry at no cost, or almost at no cost. He confirmed that the Syrians have been negotiating with the Soviet Union for the acquisition of Sukhoy-24 aircraft.

He said also the Syrians had intensified their training schedules and were pressing ahead with the re-arming and re-equipping of their military forces. The chief of staff concluded that he did not see any reduction in the danger of war with the Syrians, adding that the issue was raised during his recent visit to the United States.

Absence of Syria From Arab Groupings Noted

JN1902184989 Jerusalem in Arabic to the Arab World 1245 GMT 19 Feb 89

[From "Brevity Is the Soul of Wit" feature by Sha'ul Menashe]

[Text] The foundation of the quadripartite Arab Cooperation Council [ACC], which comprises Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and the YAR, was celebrated in Baghdad on Thursday. President Saddam stressed that Egypt is a basic pillar in the new council. What is noticed is that there are three Arab groupings on the Arab level these days: The ACC, the Arab Maghreb Union, and the GCC. What is also noticed is that Syria is outside these frameworks. Regardless of the extent of the importance of these groupings and what they can achieve, Syria's absence has meanings.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz has announced that any Arab country seeking to join the new council should be in harmony with the founding countries. The bylaws of the ACC stipulate that acceptance of any new country will require unanimous approval. This means that the door of the ACC is shut in the face of Syria, because Syria is not in harmony with Iraq and Iraq does not approve acceptance of Syria. In brief, Syria's absence from all the Arab groupings indicates its growing isolation.

An Iraqi official has ruled out acceptance of Syria as a member of the quadripartite cooperation council, which has recently been formed. The Iraqi official explained that Syria's rulers are hostile to Egypt and Iraq, impose their military presence in Lebanon, oppose the Palestinians, and ally themselves with Khomeyni.

Shamir Seeks Jordanian, Egyptian Role in Process

TA2802102289 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 28 Feb 89 p 12

[Report by Knesset correspondent Asher Wallfish]

[Excerpt] Prime Minister Shamir signalled yesterday that during his Washington consultations in April he will try to persuade President George Bush to harness Egypt and Jordan to the wagon of an interim arrangement for the territories.

He told the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee: "Egypt and Jordan have a central role to play in the solution of the Palestine problem. We should like to see King Husayn of Jordan join Egypt's President Mubarak in making an interim arrangement possible, with or without elections in the territories."

Shamir said: "If no way is found to hold elections at this juncture, why shouldn't Egypt and Jordan organize a provisional delegation of Palestinians to negotiate with Israel?"

The prime minister emphasized that he would not object to elections if it were feasible to hold them.

He said that the involvement of Egypt and Jordan side by side in an interim arrangement would have the consent of the Alignment.

"The Camp David accords represented a major effort to differentiate between Arab countries willing to coexist with Israel and Arab countries seeking Israel's destruction," he declared.

After the meeting, he stressed that while he cleaves to the principles of Camp David, he is not dogmatic about details. Hence, he said, the negotiations need not follow every detail of the accords, since the passage of time since they were signed had brought changes.

Asked why he was in an apparent hurry to go to Washington to discuss the Middle East dispute, the prime minister said: "There is no turning tail. We have to take a stand, meeting ideas and questions head on, even if they go counter to what we believe."

He added: "American opinion by and large is not sympathetic to Israel at this time, and that is what the Congress is exposed to. Members of Congress who visited Jerusalem recently expect Israel to find convincing explanations for its position and to tackle American public opinion vigorously."

Reporting on his talks with French President Mitterrand, Shamir said Mitterrand had told him: "If I were an Israeli I would think like you. But I am French, and I have my own interests to consider." [passage omitted]

Reviving Husayn Role Sought

TA2302132489 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 23 Feb 89 pp 1, 14

[Report from Tokyo by Ronit Vardi, from Washington by Erol Guiney, and from Paris by Edwin Eytan]

[Excerpt] While the Soviet foreign minister, during his Middle East tour, is trying to advance the international conference idea as the way to solve the conflict, Israel—and probably also the United States—is trying to get Jordan's King Husayn back into the political process. The efforts to renew "the Jordanian option" will be expressed in a series of high-level international meetings expected at the end of the week in Tokyo, the Japanese capital, where government leaders from all over the world are converging to attend Emperor Hirohito's funeral.

This issue was also raised in yesterday's meeting between Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir and French President Francois Mitterrand. Shamir asked the French president to convince Husayn to return to the political process and open a dialogue with Israel. Shamir stressed to his host that under no circumstances and no conditions would he conduct negotiations with the PLO, either directly or indirectly. [passage omitted]

[Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on February 23 in a related report by Paris-based correspondent Yo'av Tocker on pages 1 and 6 adds: "Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir clarified last night that a new Israeli peace plan should not necessarily be expected in the near future, but rather what he called 'new routes' toward progress in the contacts, several of which were raised yesterday in his conversation with French President Francois Mitterrand. Shamir refused to go into detail about what these 'new routes' are, but presented as an example new Israeli ideas about opening peace negotiations without the participation of the PLO. These new ideas, according to Shamir, are based on his basic political guidelines, which are opposed to the idea of an international conference and negotiations with the PLO."]

Shamir on Degree of Adherence to Camp David

TA2702122989 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1200 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] The prime minister said he does not necessarily adhere to every fine point in the Camp David accords, since changes have taken place over time. Nevertheless, he said, one should not deny the fact that the Camp David accords serve as a cornerstone for all his views about a settlement of the conflict in the region.

Our correspondent Arye Golan said Mr Shamir made the remarks upon leaving a session of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. He told the correspondents that he does not see any PLO moderation and that in his view the organization is carrying out a plan of deception.

Shamir Tells Cabinet PLO Pressed To Change Stand

TA2602112589 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1100 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] In this morning's cabinet session, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir said there is no need to rush to draft a political plan, seeing that the inhabitants of Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza are pressuring the PLO to come closer to Israel's positions. The prime minister made these remarks in reply to a query by Minister Moshe Shahal, who asked that a political plan acceptable to the entire government be formulated before Mr Shamir's departure for Washington.

Our correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the visits abroad by the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the chief of staff were reviewed in the Cabinet session. The cabinet also approved the appointment of Ya'aqov Lifschitz as director general of the Finance Ministry.

Sharon Urges Replacing Arabs in Nabulus With Jews

TA2702055289 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0500 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Minister Ari'el Sharon said that in retaliation for the killing of the soldier in the Nabulus casbah, the Arab inhabitants should be evacuated and a military unit installed in their homes; later, he continued, the area should be inhabited by Jewish settlers. He also called for the expulsion of dozens of Arabs responsible for unrest. At a Likud election rally in Tiberias, Minister Sharon said that yesterday he proposed that the government initiate a bill providing a legal basis for such moves. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that Minister Sharon sharply attacked the Israeli Government, whose ministers, he said, boast about the Tabah accord. He said the agreement is a failure and a demonstration of political weakness and total surrender to Egypt, which will have grave consequences in the future.

Military Leader on Requiring Movement Permits

TA2402204089 Jerusalem Television Service in Arabic 1730 GMT 24 Feb 89

[Interview with Major General Yitzhaq Mordekhay, the commander of the Southern Command, by Yoni Ben-Menahem; date and place not given—videotaped in Hebrew with Arabic subtitles]

[Text] [Ben-Menahem] Who will not receive the special permits for free movement into Israel? What kind of people will not receive them?

[Mordekhay] There will be a group of people who chronically engage in acts of violence, people who are tried and still go back to violence, people who do not mend their ways despite repeated warnings. We will determine these criteria by law once in a while and will make sure that people know them.

[Ben-Menahem] Do you also intend to seize this opportunity to catch criminals? Do you intend to catch tax evaders, for instance?

[Mordekhay] In principle, the purpose of the drive to begin next week is to give permits. Still, in specific cases, certain people with accumulated debts or other offenses will then have to settle their affairs with the Israeli authorities. In principle, though, the goal of the drive is to allow the residents to get permits at an accelerated pace and within a limited period of time, so that most of the Gaza Strip vehicles will have permits and be able to move freely.

[Ben-Menahem] Maj Gen Mordekhay, you noted that quiet has prevailed in the Gaza Strip for a long time now. Still, the residents complain about heavier taxes and other things, and you are now, in fact, imposing a new restriction on the residents. Do you not see a contradiction here?

[Mordekhay] No, on the contrary. We have recently lifted the curfew from the Gaza Strip at night. During the recent strike, which lasted a few days, we did not impose a curfew on the camps. We definitely avoid using significant forces to patrol some of the places if law and order are maintained in them. We will keep friction to the minimum; we will keep intervention into daily routine to the minimum, wherever life is seen to be going back to normal. At the same time...

[Ben-Menahem, interrupting] Still, does not this drive, in fact, contradict this policy?

[Mordekhay] At the same time, the goal of this drive is to make sure that most of the people who are decent, hardworking, and industrious, and who desire to travel into Israel, will have permits and be able to do so. It is my intention, indeed, that the permits will be given to a significant majority of the residents. The few people who disrupt the normal daily life of the residents of the Gaza Strip will be the ones who will not enjoy this right of moving freely and enjoying all walks of life both in the strip and in Israel.

[Ben-Menahem] Thank you.

Shomron Explains IDF Military Doctrine

TA2702102189 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 27 Feb 89 p 10

[Report by defense correspondent Kenneth Kaplan]

[Text] Tel Aviv—Chief of General Staff Dan Shomron said yesterday that in a future war the IDF should do everything it could to seize the initiative. Israel did not have the stamina to adopt a defensive posture as a means for tiring out the Arab armies, he said.

He was responding to a question challenging the IDF's traditional offensive military doctrine during a lecture sponsored by Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies.

Shomron also said that in a bid to gain the initiative in battle, he saw preemptive strikes as both "moral and legitimate," if Israel were in an inferior position.

"When it's clear to us that we're faced with war, we must not lose the initiative, because that's too heavy a price to pay," he said.

The late Yig'al Allon, who was a minister in Golda Me'ir's cabinet at the time of the Yom Kippur War, eventually regretted not backing the request by then chief of general staff David El'azar to launch a preemptive air strike to alleviate the military situation.

Shomron, whose lecture was entitled "The IDF toward the 1990s," assigned particular significance to Iraq's new status in the Arab world.

Iraq, he said, must decide whether it is joining the pragmatic or extreme circles in the Arab world. This decision will largely influence whether the Middle East moves toward a political solution to regional problems, or towards war.

"Iraq has 55 divisions of land forces. That's more than the U.S. and Israel combined," he said. "They have a very strong air force with MIG-29s, Sukhoy-24s, air refuelling capability. The eastern front has a real strategic rear, and it's freed itself from the Gulf War."

Syria, Shomron said, despite its isolation in the Arab world and its severe economic problems, is not cutting back on its military might and is in fact preparing a military option. Shomron disclosed last week that Syria had obtained more MIG-29 fighters and Sukhoy-24 bombers.

Shomron described a situation where the Syrians may feel that exercising the military option would lead to territorial gains, even on a limited scale. The Soviet Union, even if it opposed a Middle East war, would be forced to provide support for its client Syria. Likewise Iraq, even if it would not be otherwise inclined to fight a war, could feel itself obligated in such a situation to send an expeditionary force.

Responding for the first time to a recently published book by Ari'el Levite, a Jaffee Centre researcher, which urges the IDF to reexamine its offensive military doctrine, Shomron said the IDF's doctrine is essentially defensive in that it doesn't aim to initiate political processes via military actions. On the operative level, however, the objective is to achieve the end of the war as quickly as possible via offensive means, he said.

The Arabs, however, have a completely opposite doctrine, he said, which sees war as a means for arriving at a political solution and calls for capturing a piece of Israeli territory and then letting Israel spend its might trying to regain it.

However, Shomron said, the outcome of a war is not necessarily determined by the differences in numbers, but on the psychological level. By adopting an offensive posture, Israel could still use its relative strengths in the quality of its manpower and technology to demoralize the enemy and bring about a quick end of the war.

Muslim Figures Speak Against Rushdie Book

TA2802120289 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1100 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] In Israel, 250 Muslim religious figures from the Galilee, the Triangle, and the Negev are calling on Ministers Der'i, Hammer, and Olmert to ensure that Rushdie's book is not translated into Hebrew. They say its publication in Israel may offend the feelings of over half a million Muslims and unnecessarily augment the friction between Muslims and Jews.

Shomron, Mitzna' Discuss Soldier's Death

TA2502185789 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1800 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Excerpts] The funeral of Staff Sergeant Binyamin Meisner will take place tomorrow in Tiv'on. Meisner was killed yesterday afternoon in the Nabulus casbah by a concrete block thrown from a rooftop.

Today, the chief of staff and other senior army officers visited the area and spoke with the soldiers who were involved in the incident. Afterwards, Lieutenant General Dan Shomron said the army will respond in such a way that it will not be worthwhile for others to take similar actions. The price, he said, will be a heavy one. At the same time, Gen Shomron said the army would not permit the setting up of no-go areas for its soldiers. [passage omitted]

The head of the army's Central Command, Major General 'Amram Mitzna', told reporter Alan Ben-'Ami that the army will continue to patrol the narrow streets of the casbah.

[Begin recording] [passage omitted] [Ben-'Ami] The soldiers responded with fire. What in fact were they firing? Was this live fire?

[Mitzna'] Soldiers are allowed to open fire when heavy stones like this are being thrown from the roofs or the windows on them if and when they can spot the exact point or the people that throw the stones. I am emphasizing in my speaking to you the heavy stones, because it is a big difference from just throwing stones. [passage omitted]

[Ben-'Ami] Punishments given by courts for stone throwing and other violent acts have been stiffened considerably, and yet it does not seem to deter, at least the group involved here. To what extent do you feel the punishments that are given can really have an effect on the level of violence?

[Mitzna'] It is always a problem speaking a day after such an incident when a soldier is killed, but being in charge of the total area, I have to look above and then to tell you that in the last couple of months, the area is very quiet. The volume of incidents is slowing down. When you are speaking about Nabulus in particular—Nabulus is more quiet in the last 2 months than in the period before the intifadah [uprising], pre-1987. So we succeeded, with all the means and the measures we took, to slow down the rate of violence. [passage omitted] [end recording]

West Bank Resident Killed in 'Violent Clash'

TA2802063189 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0600 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Excerpt] In the Ramallah District village of Dayr Ibzi', 25-year-old 'Attawi Lutfi Hamdallah was killed last night in a violent clash with IDF soldiers. Our correspondent Arye Gus reports that no details of the incident have been learned so far. [passage omitted]

[Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 28 February in a report by Joel Greenberg and Mikhal Sela' on pages 1 and 12 adds that "elsewhere in the West Bank, troops wounded three men during a clash with protesters in Halhul, north of Hebron, military sources said. One of the men was wounded by gunfire, and two others by rubber bullets. Ten Palestinians were shot and wounded, one of them seriously, in yesterday's clashes in the Gaza Strip, according to Palestinian sources. The IDF spokesman put the number at four."]

Average Age of Protesters Shot by Army Drops

TA2102183389 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1800 GMT 21 Feb 89

[Text] Citizens Rights Movement Knesset Member 'Oded Zucker told a Jerusalem news conference today the average age of Palestinian protesters falling victim to army bullets in the intifadah [uprising] has dropped by 8 years since January 1988. Zucker said his analysis of army figures shows the average age of Palestinian protesters killed in November was 18.7 years, while in January 1988 the average was 26.5 years.

Military sources told REUTERS they could not confirm Zucker's findings, but they said the age of the protesters had fallen dramatically since the beginning of the uprising.

Zucker announced the opening of an Israeli information center, which would monitor human rights in the territories.

PLO Said To Control East Jerusalem Merchants

TA2102114789 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 21 Feb 89

[Text] Police Commissioner David Kraus said during a Knesset interior committee debate today that the PLO controls the East Jerusalem merchants. He added that the police have been unable to contend with the problem of the commercial strike in East Jerusalem. This strike provides the background for disturbances. The police chief added that he believes the businessmen whose shops are closed must be ordered completely closed, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. He noted, however, that the police affairs minister objects to such a move.

Frayj Urges Bethlehem Citizens To Pay Due Taxes

JN2602165689 Jerusalem Television Service in Arabic 1730 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Excerpts] Bethlehem Mayor Ilyas Frayj has threatened to suspend all the municipality's vital services to the citizens in the wake of the increasing financial deficit, as many people refrain from paying their due taxes to the municipality. Therefore, the municipality has been unable to pay the garbage collectors' salaries for the past 2 months, and these collectors have therefore not reported to work for about 2 weeks. Here is the report of our correspondent, Fayiz 'Umar:

[Begin recording] [Frayj] As mayor, I do my best to deal with the situation and obtain money to pay the salaries as soon as possible. [passage omitted]

Of course, the merchant who opens at 0900 and closes at 1200 will be unable to pay the rent. Regrettably, some merchants work and earn money, but they do not want to pay. They do not respond to the national feeling and the national duty that the citizen should support his homeland or municipality. I appeal to Bethlehem citizens to honor their obligations to their municipality so that it can continue to provide services.

We have been unable to collect the city garbage; this is unhealthy and disgraceful. We may be forced to close the first aid and fire fighting centers. We may be forced to close the central market and stop night street lighting.

I am aware of the financial situation in the country. I am aware of the bad economic situation in the country. But I think it is the national duty of the citizen to come to the municipality building in order to do his duty or even donate to the municipality so that we can continue our services. [passage omitted]

All the taxes we levied amount to 15 percent of the due taxes. For instance, we have 1,150 merchants in the city. They are supposed to obtain 1,150 crafts and industries licenses, but only 200 of them have so far paid and obtained these licenses. [end recording]

Moneychangers Close Under Activist Pressures

TA2402093189 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 24 Feb 89 p 1

[Report by Joel Greenberg]

[Text] Several moneychangers in Nabulus and other West Bank towns have decided to close down rather than meet demands by intifadah [uprising] activists to further hike the exchange rate of the plummeting Jordanian dinar, Palestinian sources said yesterday.

The activists want to prop up the dinar's value in order to cut losses by Palestinians, who have had their savings and wages slashed by an almost 50 percent drop in the dinar's value.

According to Palestinian reports, moneychangers reached an understanding with the activists late last week, according to which the dinar would be bought at NIS [New Israeli Shekel] 3.10, and sold at NIS 3.20. However, members of the "popular committees" are now demanding that the dinar be bought at NIS 3.30, and sold at NIS 3.40.

Moneychangers in Ramallah, Bethlehem and several other areas are also reported to have shut down.

The closure in Nabulus marks the second time moneychangers in the city have shut their shops this month. About two weeks ago, the moneychangers were ordered by activists to shut down for three days in order to prevent speculation that would further drive down the value of the dinar.

IRNA Reports Husayn Remarks on Rushdie Book

LD2602062489 Tehran IRNA in English 0620 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] Athens, Feb. 26, IRNA—Jordan's King Husayn became the first pro-West Arab leader to break a silence over British author Salman Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses" describing it as offensive to Muslims. But in an interview, Husayn declined to comment on whether the India-born British author should be punished for blasphemy. "I don't care to comment about the action of the Government of Iran myself," he said in an interview with the American Cable News Network (CNN) in Tokyo Saturday [25 February].

"I have not seen eye to eye with Iran over many years over many issues." But he said: "It is really very very sad that the book...is obviously offensive to hundreds of millions of Muslims throughout the world." The book had been written in a manner that questioned the very foundation of Islam, Husayn said.

Arab leaders have kept an eerie silence over the Rushdie affair, apparently to avoid outbreak of demonstrations and protests in their countries against the book. In non-Arab Muslim countries like Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Muslims have held mass demonstrations condemning the novel and demanding death penalty against Rushdie. Nearly 30 Muslims have been martyred in India and Pakistan when police opened fire to stop the demonstrations in the past two weeks.

Tehran called its ambassadors back to Iran from the 12 European Community states after their foreign ministers decided to call their most high-ranking diplomats from the Iranian capital in protest over Imam Khomeyni's fatwah [edict] to kill Rushdie.

Asked if the fatwah would not give Islam a bad name, the Jordanian monarch replied "I believe the whole crisis is most unfortunate, the book itself and all the reactions from all over." The Jordanian monarch was in Tokyo to attend the funeral of Japanese Emperor Hirohito. He spoke on CNN's "Saturday Newsmaker" program, monitored in Athens.

King Husayn, King Baudouin Meet in Tokyo

JN2502184889 Amman Domestic Service in English 1700 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] His majesty the king met in Tokyo today with King Baudouin of Belgium. Discussions during the meeting touched on relations between the two countries and means of promoting them in various fields.

Husayn Receives Arab Envoys

JN2602150089 Amman Domestic Service in English 1200 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] His majesty the king received in his Tokyo residence heads of Arab diplomatic missions in Japan. His majesty briefed them on the latest developments in the Arab arena and efforts under way to realize comprehensive Arab solidarity. His majesty stressed that the existing cooperation councils in the Gulf region, the Arab Maghreb, and the Arab East give the Arab nation an effective weight in international forums.

The Arab ambassadors lauded his majesty's wisdom and his continued endeavors in serving Arab causes. The audience was attended by the chief of the royal court and Jordan's ambassador in Tokyo.

Reportage on Visit by PDRY Foreign Minister

Arrives in Amman 25 Feb

JN2502111489 Amman Domestic Service in English 1100 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] South Yemeni Foreign Minister Dr 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dali arrived in Amman today on a 4-day official visit to Jordan, during which he will deliver a message to his majesty the king from President Haydar Abu Bakr al-'Attas. In an arrival statement, Dr al-Dali described relations between Jordan and South Yemen as historic. He paid tribute to the visits exchanged among senior officials of both countries. He also praised the establishment of the Arab Cooperation Council as an advanced step towards pan-Arab coordination.

Meets With Al-Qasim

JN2502192089 Amman Domestic Service in English 1700 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] The deputy prime minister and foreign minister, Marwan al-Qasim, conferred today with the foreign minister of the Democratic Republic of Yemen, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dali. Discussions of the meeting dealt with international and regional developments as well as efforts being made to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East. Discussions also dealt with the situation in the occupied Arab territories, and views were identical on the issues discussed. The Yemeni minister arrived in Amman earlier in the day.

Holds Talks With Al-Rifa'i

JN2602145289 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] Amman—Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i received in his office this morning PDRY Foreign Minister Dr 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dali in the presence of Marwan al-Qasim, deputy prime minister and foreign minister.

During the meeting, they reviewed developments in the region. Dr al-Dali voiced his country's appreciation for the positive efforts Jordan is exerting under His Majesty King Husayn to support and enhance joint Arab action.

They also reviewed the stages of establishing the Arab Cooperation Council [ACC]. The visiting minister conveyed the congratulations of the PDRY chairman, government, and people on the ACC's establishment. He asserted that the ACC's establishment is a positive step on the path of Arab cooperation in the Arab nation's interest and is designed to fulfil the Arab peoples' hopes and aspirations.

Their discussions also dealt with cooperation between the two fraternal countries. They agreed to form a joint higher committee between the two countries to enhance and promote these relations in the economic, trade, and cultural fields in the welfare and interest of both peoples.

Dr al-Dali conveyed an invitation from the PDRY prime minister to the prime minister to visit the PDRY. The prime minister thankfully accepted the invitation. The date of the visit will be set later. The meeting was attended by the PDRY ambassador to the Kingdom, the Jordanian ambassador to the PDRY, and the director of the Arab relations department of the PDRY Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Meets Prince Hasan 27 Feb

JN2702174589 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Amman—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan the regent received at the Royal Hashemite Court this morning PDRY Foreign Minister 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dali. The minister handed Prince Hasan a message to His Majesty King Husayn from his brother His Excellency Haydar Abu Bakr al-'Attas, chairman of the PDRY's Supreme People's Council Presidium. The message contains congratulations to his majesty on the establishment of the Arab Cooperation Council, which Al-'Attas described as a practical and tangible step toward mobilizing Arab resources and capabilities in the interest of the entire Arab nation.

Prince Hasan conveyed through the minister His Majesty King Husayn's thanks to President al-'Attas for his congratulations. He stressed the need for comprehensive coordination between all the Arab countries to deal with the issues of the age in the way that reflects best on all Arab peoples. His highness blessed the establishment of the joint ministerial committee between the two countries, wishing it the best of success in promoting cooperation between the two fraternal countries. The meeting was attended by Marwan al-Qasim, deputy prime minister and foreign minister.

Agriculture Minister Yusuf Hamdan al-Jabr also received PDRY Foreign Minister Dr 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dali. He reviewed the development of agriculture in Jordan in recent years and the ministry's agricultural policy in implementing agricultural projects in cooperation with the private sector. He pointed out that Jordan had made great progress in the fields of protecting agriculture inside plastic houses, drip irrigation, and natural and artificial forestation. The minister stated that through collective Arab cooperation in various fields, especially agriculture, we can reach self-sufficiency and achieve Arab food security.

For his part, Dr al-Dali welcomed cooperation and coordination between the two sisterly countries in agriculture through the exchange of agricultural expertise. He also favored using Jordanian experience in the field of agricultural development, especially in drip irrigation and new technology in fruit and vegetable production.

Holds Final Session of Talks

JN2702202889 Amman Television Service in English 2000 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] A final session of talks was held this evening between the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mr Marwan al-Qasim with Dr 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dali. Mr al-Qasim and Dr al-Dali reviewed the results of the talks which the Yemeni minister had had with the Jordanian officials. Agreement was reached during the meeting to start measures that are aimed at forming a joint ministerial committee to promote relations between the two countries in the various fields.

Comments on Arab Issues

JN2702101889 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 27 Feb 89 pp 1, 16

[By Rabab Mangu]

[Text] PDRY Foreign Minister Dr 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dali has said that the formation of the Arab Cooperation Council [ACC] is not a reaction of any kind nor is it an axis in the region, but a national contribution to intra-Arab cooperation. He said that the ACC will be incorporated within more comprehensive cooperation with other groups that have emerged at the same time.

In an exclusive interview with AL-RA'Y, Al-Dali explained the importance of the ACC in achieving Yemeni unity. He said the ACC will contribute toward the unity of the two Yemens. He said: The ACC will help in achieving new steps toward Yemeni unity, which will play a role within the Arab Cooperation Council. Al-Dali did not rule out the PDRY's joining the ACC in the future provided that two Yemens are united first. He said: The PDRY is in the stage of consultations and of gathering information on the ACC. The subject of the PDRY's joining the council depends on further consultations on the basis of a unified Yemen first, and the intra-Arab aspect second.

Dr al-Dali announced that President Haydar Abu Bakr al-'Attas will make an official visit to Jordan soon and the topic of ACC will be high on the agenda.

On signs of unity between the two Yemens, He said: The agreements between the PDRY and the YAR, concluded last year, are very important in achieving unity. All these agreements reflected sound and democratic foundations for real unity between the two countries.

Al-Dali stressed that the unity of the two Yemens will be comprehensive and complete. He said: We are speaking about unity from a Yemeni national perspective in its complete form, covering all fields and unifying political organization, regulations, legislation, granting citizens full freedom of expression, and holding free elections to form higher and legislative local councils—namely, a comprehensive unity. It is not the kind of unity that covers only certain aspects of the relationship.

Dr al-Dali explained that meetings between the leaders of the two Yemens will be intensive and regular. He added that the broad outlines of this unity have been agreed upon. He said: The broad outlines of this unity have been agreed upon and the draft constitution of the unified state needs to be discussed further; practical steps need to be taken to adopt the constitution. He added: The two countries have made large strides toward unity through the Cairo, Tripoli, Kuwait, and Sanaa agreements. We are waiting for the leaders of the two countries to meet to achieve further practical steps.

Turning to Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's recent visit to the region and his proposals, Dr al-Dali explained that Shevardnadze's proposals all support the convening of an international Middle East peace conference. He said: Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's proposals for the region do not constitute a change in the Soviet position. He affirmed that the views of the Soviet Union and the concerned Arab states are in agreement and reveal a contradiction between Soviet and Israeli viewpoints. He added: The Soviet foreign minister's statements have been welcomed by all the Arab states he visited. These statements stressed the consistent Soviet position on the international conference and the Israeli rejectionist stand.

On the U.S. Administration's recent statements, which added nothing new to the U.S. position on the Middle East problem, Al-Dali stated that the U.S. Administration has no acceptable justification for its hesitation to announce a clear position on the international conference. He added: We expected the new U.S. Administration to express a clear stand on the issues of convening an international conference and the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and an independent state. However, it is regrettable to hear U.S. statements which contain nothing new, especially after the PNC [Palestine National Council] and the PLO had recognized UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

He went on to say: As U.S. attempts to justify the U.S. position are useless, one cannot be certain about the U.S. stand on the Palestine question and Arab causes. We hope that the Soviet foreign minister's recent meetings will have positive and new results for a solution to the problem.

Dr al-Dali explained that the way to solve the Middle East problem is by convening an international conference—which is acceptable to the world, the Palestinians, and the Arabs, but not to Israel.

The Yemeni minister condemned Israeli measures to suppress the intifadah [uprising] in the occupied Arab territories. He described these measures as suppressive and bestial. He said: The continuation of the heroic intifadah in the occupied Arab territories will lead to the achievement of the Palestinian people's aspirations of self-determination and an independent state, especially as the international community has become aware of the Israeli stand, which, while demanding secure borders, rejects the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, and uses brutal methods to suppress the intifadah.

On the subject of Yemeni statements regarding the northern border of the PDRY and the southern border of the YAR as a unified area for oil extraction, Dr Al-Dali refused to call these areas borders, but the furthermost parts of both countries. He said: The Yemeni people are one people despite the existence of two regimes in the north and south Yemens.

He added: The leaders of the two parts agreed to exploit underground national resources in the interest of the one Yemeni people. The most important development in this field is the agreement signed in Sanaa in June 1988. The agreement is a major achievement and a practical step leading to other steps on the path to the unity of the Yemeni people.

On the question of the amount of oil expected in the joint Yemeni area, he explained that the area has not yet undergone a seismological survey. He said: We cannot predict the amount of oil in the area. We do not have accurate information about the reserves. The extracted oil will be divided equally between the two Yemens. The oil extraction contract has not yet been awarded to any company.

Departs Amman 28 Feb

JN2802125389 Amman Domestic Service in English 1200 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] South Yemen's Foreign Minister Dr 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dali left Amman via Al-Ramtha today for Damascus, concluding a 4-day official visit to Jordan. During his stay in Amman, the Yemeni foreign minister met with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the regent, and delivered a message to his majesty the king from President Haydar Abu Bakr al-'Attas.

Dr al-Dali, in a statement to reporters, said that the outcome of his discussions with senior Jordanian officials was constructive. He added that the talks led to a common understanding towards various issues, specially those on bilateral cooperation. He also welcomed the founding of the Arab Cooperation Council grouping Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and North Yemen as a practical step towards consolidating Arab potentialities.

Reportage on Israeli Air Raid on Palestinians

Shimlan Township Hit

NC2802093989 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0936 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Here is a report from the newsdesk: A Voice of Lebanon correspondent has reported that Israeli warplanes have been raiding Shimlan township [on the mountain] for some time. We will provide more details as soon as we receive them.

Palestinian Position Raided

NC2802094589 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0939 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Adding to the report which we broadcast a short while ago on the Israeli air raids, our correspondent has reported that the Israeli warplanes carried out two raids: the first on Mtul Shimlan at 1128 and the other against a Palestinian position between 'Aytat and 'Aynab.

Mountain Area Bombed

NC2802095889 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0952 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Excerpt] Israeli warplanes are currently conducting a new air raid on the mountain area. This is the third raid since 1128.

We have learned that plane departures have been slowed down because of antiaircraft fire which can reach the planes. Beirut airport has been closed. [passage omitted]

DFLP Positions Targeted

NC2802103089 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Excerpt] Israeli warplanes carried out three raids on the mountain area between 1128 and 1145 today. Six planes raided Mtul Shimlan, a Palestinian position in 'Aynab, and then the Baysur Hills.

Our correspondent has reported tht the majority of the targets were Palestinian positions belonging to the Ahmad Jibril-led [as heard] DFLP. The raiding planes were flying over the sea and Beirut airport. [passage omitted]

Concussion Bombs Used

NC2802105289 Beirut Voice of National Reistance in Arabic 1033 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] We were informed a short while ago that the Israeli war planes left the Lebanese skies at approximately 1215 today.

A Palestinian national source reported the following: A formation of six enemy planes carried out four air raids against positions in Shimlan Hills, Baysur Hills, and 'Aynab from 1128 to 1205 today. The Zionist enemy used concussion bombs [qanabil faraghiyah] in the first raid, while rockets weighing 500 and 1,000 pounds were used in the remaining raids. Several civilian buildings were hit and several fires broke out in the targeted areas. It is believed that there are victims under the rubble. Several injured civilians were moved to hospitals in the mountain area.

We point out that, as a precautionary measure, air aviation at Beirut International Airport came to a standstill during the Zionist raids.

I repeat that the enemy planes have left the mountainous areas, which were the target of four successive air raids.

Raids Kill 2, Injure 27

NC2802131189 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1230 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Excerpt] Israeli warplanes carried out a series of air raids from 1130 until 1200 today against PSP and Palestinian, particularly DFLP, positions. The raids targeted positions in the Baysur Hills, Shimlan, 'Aynab, and 'Ayn 'Unub. Around 27 civilians were injured in the 'Aynab School and nearby areas, and 2 DFLP members were martyred. The hostile aircraft were confronted by intensive antiaircraft fire during the raids. Air traffic at Beirut International Airport was halted during the hostile aircraft action.

A PSP security source made a statement in which he said that Israeli military aircraft raided nationalist positions in Baysur Hills, Shimlan, and 'Aynab this morning. The town of 'Aynab came under indiscriminate bombardment that hit civilian areas, the main road, and the town's school. The bombardment left 27 civilians injured, including 21 children, a female teacher and six citizens. [passage omitted]

PSP Statement on Attacks

NC2802151989 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1400 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] The PSP information bureau has released a statement on the Israeli attacks on the Baysur hills, Shimlan, 'Ayn 'Unub, and 'Aynab. The statement said: Israel carried out a barbaric act of aggression today against the Al-Shahhar villages and towns in the mountain district, including peaceful residential areas and the 'Aynab school, where several persons were martyred and scores of children and civilians were injured. These atrocious attacks confirm that organized Zionist terrorism is the real terrorism. It violates human rights and carries out all forms of killing and destruction, even striking at children's schools deep inside Lebanon, as happened today.

This Israeli act of aggression is in line with the deportations and the siege of the southern villages. It is also a link in the chain of recurrent acts of aggression against the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples. The Israeli war of expulsion against the Palestinians confirms that the aim of Israeli policy is to strike at and besiege the Palestinian resistance, with the intention of dragging it to humiliating negotiations that would lead to the liquidation of Palestinian national rights.

The PSP information bureau statement added: The PSP, which strongly condemns the Israeli act of aggression against children's schools in the mountain area today, urges national, Arab, and international public opinion to denounce this barbaric crime, condemn the Israeli aggression, and launch a large-scale solidarity campaign with the Lebanese people in their steadfastness against this unbridled aggression.

The PSP also stresses that human rights are being violated in Lebanon every day, while America and the West, which support Israel, brag about human rights. We call on world public opinion and international organizations to adopt collective stands condemning the aggression and assert this condemnation at all international forums to deter Israel from its acts of aggression.

Ja'ja' Meets 'Awn, Comments on Bkirki Meeting

NC2702193989 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1845 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Lebanese Forces commander Dr Samir Ja'ja' met with Prime Minister General Michel 'Awn at the Defense Ministry this afternoon after participating in the meeting at Bkirki.

Upon emerging from the Bkirki meeting, Dr Ja'ja' voiced full support for the proposal that Patriarch Sfayr made in Kuwait, which gives priority to holding presidential elections over another proposal that calls for simultaneously dealing with the issues of the elections and reforms.

He added: That was originally the Lebanese Forces' position. Now it is time for the elections. He described the call for introducing reforms as some sort of a novelty and a joke. He added: We have been discussing reforms for 5 years but no comprehensive agreement has been reached. The call for reforms before elections, he said, is an impossible demand advanced by those who do not want elections to be held. If we want to be realistic and practical, let us work to hold the presidential elections.

Dr Samir Ja'ja' said he would respond to an invitation to meet with the Arab committee members, noting that the names of those to be invited by the committee have not yet been disclosed. He noted that a discussion on this issue is now under way at the Arab League Headquarters in Tunis, noting that no final agreement has been reached yet on the names to be invited to Tunis, Kuwait, or perhaps another Arab state.

Discusses Agreement Measures

NC2702213889 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] A meeting was held at the Army Headquarters in Al-Yarzah chaired by Prime Minister General Michel 'Awn and attended by Lebanese Forces Commander Dr Samir Ja'ja' and a number of Army officers and officials from the Lebanese Forces. The conferees discussed the measures that have been implemented so far and which should be implemented according to the agreement between the Army and Lebanese Forces.

Lebanese Forces Reportedly Placed on Alert

NC2802083089 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0800 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Following last night's meeting between General Michel 'Awn and Samir Ja'ja', the Lebanese Forces have again alerted their elements in various places. It has been reported that the forces brought tanks to Al-Dikwanah and the vicinity of Sa'at al-'Abd [in East Beirut].

Moreover, there were signs of disturbance and anxiety during Gen 'Awn's meeting with members of the six-man parliamentary committee. The committee had informed those who attended the Bkirki meeting that Gen 'Awn had demanded it in order to speed up assembling the Lebanese Forces in the barracks preparatory to moving them outside Beirut.

Rushdie Book 'Complicated' Hostages Issue

NC2802102089 Beirut AL-SHIRA in Arabic 27 Feb 89 p 7

[Text] Informed sources have emphasized that the issue of the foreign hostages detained in Lebanon became more intricate following the tension caused in the relations between Iran and the EC member states as a result of the issue of Salman Rushdie's book ["The Satanic Verses"]. The sources pointed out that other reasons—implicitly connected with Iran's failure to honor its pledges to London to free the British hostages in return for the normalization of relations between the two countries—have complicated the issue even further.

Observers have leaked out that large sums of money were deposited into the account of a Lebanese expatriate in France to be used for financing a plan, which he masterminded, to free the hostages. The sources added that he received a check for $1.4 million in Paris. According to the same sources, an Arab mediator recently paid a secret visit to Beirut, where he met with some leaders of the fundamentalist parties. The sources add that this mediator left the area secretly and that nothing was disclosed about the purpose of the visit.

A sharp argument is taking place among the various wings of Hizballah now that the date for seting free some foreign hostages is approaching. Their release, in return for a direct openness in relations between the two countries, is in implementation of the agreement concluded between U.S. President George Bush, while he was president-elect, and a state wielding influence over the kidnappers. It appears that matters have been shelved now that the issue concerning Salman Rushdie has been raised.

Iran's Hashemi Meets Leaders on Rushdie Novel

LD2802071389 Tehran IRNA in English 0659 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Beirut, Feb. 28, IRNA—An Iranian Foreign Ministry official discussed the West's conspiracies in support of the apostate Salman Rushdie in meetings with Lebanese personalities.

Mohammad Hashemi, currently here on behalf of Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati separately met with senior Shi'ite leader Al-'Allamah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah and his Sunni ally, Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban.

Hashemi, who is director general for Middle East Affairs, earlier held talks with Lebanese leaders including Prime Minister Salim al-Huss and Amal militia leader Nabih Birri, on Lebanese and regional issues.

Fadlallah Comments on Rushdie, Islam, Intifadah

NC2802080989 (Clandestine) Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic to Lebanon 0630 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] The issue of the book "Satanic Verses" continues to be the concern of loyal Muslims. Ayatollah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has said that Salman Rushdie's action is an attack against Muslims in the person of the prophet, may God's blessings and peace be with him, and his wives. This, said Fadlallah, makes it a matter of an attack and a counter-attack.

In an interview, his eminence said that Islam's battle is not with Rushdie as a person, but with those who want to use the slogan of the freedom of expression to hide their many schemes that aim to distort the image of Islam and stop the Islamic tide which has started to spread to several parts of the world.

Responding to a question, his eminence said he fears for the Afghan Islamic revolution because of the sectarian problems that have started to emerge as a result of disputes over the allocation of authority among the various sects. In his view, this helps consecrate the sectarian approach in the state, thus creating more than a domestic problem.

Shaykh Fadlallah said that the sectarian problem still persists in the Muslim world, under the protection of U.S. arrogance and certain countries which describe themselves as Muslim.

Touching on the blessed intifadah [uprising] in the occupied territories, Ayatollah Fadlallah expressed his fears regarding the U.S.-Palestinian talks, which, according to him, may lead to Palestinian-Israeli talks with the goal of stopping the intifadah.

Commenting on proposals to resolve the Lebanese issue, his eminence said that there can be a Lebanese solution only after solutions to the problems of the Middle East zone are found. He said: We do not see real indications of a solution in the near future. He pointed out that what is going on now is merely giving tranquilizers or drugs to keep Lebanon alive, so that others may take advantage of the problem to complicate or resolve other issues.

Explosion in West Beirut Leaves Casualties

NC2702190489 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1845 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] An explosion took place in front of the Jammal Bank on Corniche al-Mazra'ah at the Burj Abu Haydar crossroads in West Beirut at 1950 today. According to preliminary reports, two persons were injured and taken to Al-Maqasid Hospital. There were reports that some people were killed as a result of the explosion, which also caused extensive property damage.

More Explosions in Beirut

NC2802070189 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Three explosions took place in West Beirut last night. The first blast, which injured two persons, occurred at 1950 in front of the Jammal Bank on Corniche al-Mazra'ah, a few meters away from a roadblock manned by the Syrian occupation forces. The second explosion took place at 2140 in front of Al-Ta'awuniyah Pharmacy on Yazbik Street in Al-Musaytibayh, near a center for the Arab Democratic Party. The pharmacy was partially damaged.

The third explosion occurred at 2155 on 'Abd al-'Aziz Street in al-Hamra, near the British Bank. In a telephone contact with Radio Free Lebanon, the Shaykh Subhi al-Salih forces claimed responsibility for the latter explosion. A man claiming to speak on behalf of the organization said that the blast took place as a foot patrol for the Syrian occupation forces was passing by. The caller said that the Syrians set up roadblocks in the area and stopped pedestrians for questioning. The Syrian forces, he added, also fired haphazardly in the area close to where the explosion took place.

In another development, the 16 January Organization for the Liberation of Tripoli has announced that it opened fire at a roadblock manned by Syrian intelligence on the Dayr 'Ammar crossroads near the northern approach to Tripoli at dawn today. The organization claims that it injured two men, one from the special units and another from the intelligence service. The group vowed to continue its operations until the withdrawal of the last Syrian soldier from Lebanon.

Information Ministry Bans "Satanic Verses"

JN2702142689 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1215 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] The Ministry of Information has decided to stop dealing with Penguin, the British Penguin publishing house; Viking, the U.S. publishing house; and any other publishing house that translates or distributes the book "The Satanic Verses" written by Salman Rushdie, a British citizen of Indian origin.

Late last month, the Ministry of Information also decided to ban the circulation of the book in Syria because it does grave harm to Islam and is an attempt to distort Islam's ideological and humanitarian heritage.

A SANA correspondent has learned that the conference to be held by the Islamic countries' foreign ministers in Saudi Arabia in mid-March will discuss measures to be taken by the Islamic countries against the author of the book and the publishing and printing houses that deal with him. The Thatcher Government, which has allowed the publication of this book that harms Islam and Muslims, is protecting and encouraging the author while launching a false campaign under the slogan: "The defense of human rights".

Al-Jumayyil Visits Damascus, Meets Al-Asad

JN2602191689 Kuwait AL-SIYASAH in Arabic 25 Feb 89 p 18

[Text] Former Lebanese President Amin al-Jumayyil visited Damascus 3 days ago and met with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad.

The visit, revealed by AL-SIYASAH sources, came in a bid by Al-Jumayyil to narrow the gap between the stands of Michel 'Awn and the Syrian president on the issue of the Syrian Army's withdrawal from the western sector of Beirut as a prelude to the establishment of the greater military Beirut, which extends from the Khaldah triangle to Nahr Al-Kalb and includes the southern suburb and 'Ayn al- Rummanah.

AL-SIYASAH has also learned that the Al-Asad-Al-Jumayyil talks were successful and that the former Lebanese president told his allies that the Syrian units will withdraw from western Beirut this summer when the presidential elections will be held under the supervision of the legitimate security authorities.

In a related development, informed sources told AL-SIYASAH that General 'Awn has indirectly told the Syrian officials that he is ready to open dialogue with Damascus on condition that the Syrian officials change their position and recognize his government. Western sources also expect the channels of contact between the B'abda Palace and Al-Muhajirin Palace to be opened shortly by Al- Jumayyil himself.

Official Receives Soviet Solidarity Delegation

JN2602173489 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1415 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] Comrade Dr Sulayman Qaddah, assistant regional secretary of the [Arab Socialist Ba'th] Party, received in Damascus this morning Comrade (Anatoliy Alen), secretary [as heard] of the Soviet Committee for Solidarity with Asian and African Countries, and his delegation.

During the meeting, they reviewed the aspects of relations between the two committees in both friendly countries and ways to expand and promote them to serve the common objectives of the two committees.

Afghanistan

Limited Security Measures Lifted in Kabul

BK2802032289 London BBC World Service in English 0215 GMT 28 Feb 89

[From the "Newsreel" program]

[Text] Some of the security measures taken when a state of emergency was imposed on the Afghan capital, Kabul, just over a week ago are now being lifted. The move follows an announcement on Saturday by President Najibullah that the restrictions would be relaxed or suspended. Elise Dorsett reports from Kabul:

[Begin recording] Government officials say the state of emergency, including a curfew, is still in force. But, the tanks and armored personnel carriers, which were recently posted at key intersections, have now been removed, leaving only the small number usually stationed in front of strategic buildings, such as the presidential palace.

One senior government official said security had been stepped up because of expected mujahidin attacks on 21st February, time to coincide with the 9th anniversary of a widespread public protest against Soviet troops in Afghanistan. But, the city has recently been calm except for two rocket salvos which the government says were fired by the guerrillas. Observers point out that the armored vehicles have little strategic value. Most soldiers manning them were relaxed to the point of occasionally falling asleep. They may, more than anything else, have served to emphasize this government's determination to combat any threat—whether internal or external—after the last Soviet troops pulled out. Security forces also appear to have stopped their systematic house searches for suspected mujahidin supporters and those avoiding military service.

Last week, the government said that about 40 people had been rounded up, although independent observers believe the figure is much higher and includes a large number from the city's minority Shi'ite population. Government sources say those arrested were under surveillance for some time, a point underlined by the way security forces only searched certain districts.

The continuing calm has led to the International Committee of the Red Cross to decide to bring back personnel evacuated in the runup to the Soviet troop withdrawal, part of the exodus of diplomats and aid workers worried about future instability. Some of the other aid missions and embassies now operating with a minimum of staff say they may also consider bringing back some personnel and dependents. But severe shortages of supplies, such as petrol, are continuing disincentives for some missions, and many still maintain their wait-and-see attitude until the snow melts and there is a clearer idea of what military plans the mujahidin may have in store. [end recording]

Rebels Block Arms From Kabul, Take Tarin Kowt

BK2802103089 Hong Kong AFP in English 1021 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Islamabad, Feb 28 (AFP)—Afghan rebels are stopping military supplies from reaching Kabul, but are letting food pass through as they hold on to the road linking the Afghan capital to the Soviet border, diplomats quoted the resistance as saying Tuesday [28 February].

The government's efforts to open the Salang highway have been thwarted by rebel mujahidin forces under Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, the commander in charge of the Panjsher Valley near the road, resistance sources said.

"The mujahidin continue to hold a section of the Salang highway in the face of regime counter attacks," a report from Western diplomats said.

It quoted the resistance as insisting that "guerrillas are interdicting the military supplies and not preventing food from getting through."

Afghan President Najibullah said last week that rebels encircling Kabul were to blame for the shortage of food in the capital. It was his first admission that rebels were laying siege to the city.

Diplomats here confirmed a resistance report that about 2,000 government troops joined the guerrillas along with 10,000 pieces of light weaponry, mostly Soviet-supplied Kalashnikov rifles, in the northern region of Takhar last week.

"This was the biggest single defection since the Soviet troops withdrew on February 15," under a U.N.-brokered Geneva accord, said Mr. Mas'ud's brother Ahmad Zia, who communicates by radio with the commander from the Pakistani border city of Peshawar.

He however contradicted sources in his group, Jamiyat-e Eslami, who had reportedly said that 10,000 soldiers had defected in Takhar and joined the mujahidin.

Diplomats and intelligence sources here were also in agreement that the figure was "highly exaggerated."

Jamiyat-e Eslami spokesman Mas'ud Khalili also said "we would of course have loved to have 10,000 soldiers."

A mujahidin source meanwhile said the rebels had shot down a Kabul government helicopter in Oruzgan Province in the south.

Resistance and diplomatic sources said last week that the rebels were in control of the province and had taken its capital, Tarin Kowt. There was still however no independent confirmation of the situation in Tarin Kowt.

Destroy Khowst Radio Station

BK2802114089 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1100 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Reports from Afghanistan say mujahidin have destroyed a radio station of the Kabul regime in Khowst. They reportedly fired half a dozen shells on the radio station. There were no broadcasts over the radio station from the latest report. And in Malajuk area of Qandahar, mujahidin shot down a helicopter. The crew on board the helicopter (?were killed) on the spot.

Hikmatyar Seeks Interim Government Recognition

BK2702153189 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Eng Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, chief of the Hezb-e Eslami and a leader of the Islamic Unity of Afghan mujahidin, has said that the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and the formation of an interim government is a major achievement for the mujahidin. Addressing a news conference in Peshawar today, he appealed to the entire world to recognize the legal interim government of the mujahidin. He also appealed for giving it a representation at the United Nations. He said elections in Afghanistan would be held within 5 months and that now the mujahidin is mobilizing all its energies to topple the Najibullah regime.

The leader of the Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahidin said that 95 percent of the territory in Afghanistan is under the mujahidin's control and it has decided to transfer the interim government inside Afghanistan within a month.

Najibullah Messages Appeal to Leaders for Peace

Cables UAE, Austria, Sweden

LD2802094789 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0433 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Kabul, Feb 27 BAKHTAR—On behalf of Najibullah, president of the RA [Republic of Afghanistan], messages have been communicated to president of the United Arab Emirates, His Excellency Zayid ibn Sultan Al Nuhayyan, to His Excellency Kurt Waldheim, president of Austria, His Majesty Carl Gustaf, king of Sweden.

The messages note that comprehensive measures have been taken by the Republic of Afghanistan for the restoration of peace and stability in the country and in the region. However, Pakistan and the United States by ignoring the spirit and letter of the Geneva accords have intensified their interventions into the internal affairs of Afghanistan particularly after the complete withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan, which has posed serious threat to peace and security in the country and the region.

The messages reiterate that the political settlement of the Afghan problem is only possible through dialogue by the Afghans themselves without foreign interventions. The messages have urged the leaders of these countries to urge Pakistan and the United States to comply with the Geneva accords.

Cables Ben Ali, King Husayn

LD2802095389 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0421 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Kabul, Feb. 27, BAKHTAR—On behalf of Najibullah, president of the RA [Republic of Afghanistan], a message has been communicated to Amman addressed to King Husayn of Jordan.

Expressing satisfaction of the friendly relations between the two Islamic countries, the message notes about the all-sided efforts made by the RA for the restoration of peace and stability in the country. On the other hand, Pakistan and the United States continue their interferences into the internal affairs of the RA in defiance to Geneva accords and other internationally-accepted principles.

These interventions have become intensified after the full withdrawal of the Soviet military contingents from Afghanistan and has thus jeopardized peace and stability in the country and the region at large, says the message.

The message requests His Excellency Malek Husayn to help in drawing the attention of the other sides of the Geneva accords for the fulfilment of their international obligations.

Similarly, President Najibullah has addressed a message to His Excellency Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, president of the Republic of Tunisia.

The message notes that with the complete withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan there remains no pretexts for the continuation of interventions into the internal affairs of Afghanistan. However, by ignoring the letter and spirit of the Geneva accords, Pakistan and the United States have further intensified their interventions and has thus posed serious threat to peace and understanding in the country and the region as well. His assistance has been asked in the message to urge the other parties to the accords to honour their commitments.

Another message has been communicated on behalf of President Najibullah to Athens addressed to president of the Republic of Greece, His Excellency Khristos Sartzetakis.

The message points out that despite that the RA has fulfilled all its commitments to the Geneva accords, the best manifestation of which is the complete withdrawal of the Soviet soldiers from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the

United States have escalated their interferences into the internal affairs of Afghanistan endangering peace and security in the country and the region.

The message stressed that at this juncture of time when there exists the chances of the political settlement of the situation through dialogue and negotiations among the Afghans themselves, the peace-loving countries of the world are expected to play a more effective role in regard with the restoration of peace in the country and the world. The message appeals to the president of Greece to draw the attention of the other parties to the accords for fulfilling their obligations.

Notices 251-253 Issued on Pakistani 'Violations'

LD2802095689 Kabul BAKHTAR in English
0448 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Kabul, Feb 27, BAKHTAR—The 251st-253d notices of the Republic of Afghanistan on violations by Pakistan of the provisions of the Geneva accords were submitted to the United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP) on Sunday.

In the 251st notice information on the Para Chenar military training camp where over than 1,200 extremists are trained, by 9 American military advisors, in the use of armaments and methods of subversion and later sent into Afghanistan are given. Regular sending of extremist groups from Pakistan to Afghanistan for committing plunderous acts in the Republic of Afghanistan is pointed out in the 252d notice.

Twelve instances of extremists ground to ground rocket attacks on the densely populated areas in the capital and provinces of the country which have resulted to [as received] remarkable human and material losses are mentioned in the 253d notice. In the notice it is pointed out that dispatch of modern armaments from the Pakistani territory to the extremists has enabled them to endanger peace, security and inflict countless human and material losses here.

It further points out that since the return of the limited military contingents of the Soviet Union back home interventions of Pakistan in the internal affairs of Afghanistan has increased.

The notices ask UNGOMAP that on the basis of Paragraph 7, Document Number 4 assess the Pakistani violations and convey the results to the related sides.

Kabul Reports Military Situation 26-27 Feb

LD2702144389 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari
1330 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] The operational situation is normal in most of the provinces. The units and companies of the Armed Forces are in control of the situation and continuing their daily activities. In some regions where the extremist warmongering groups had resorted to plundering and stealing people's homes and properties, the security forces, carrying out mopping up operations, crushed a number of the plunderers and destroyed a large number of their various types of weapons. The BIA military section, quoting authoritative sources in the Armed Forces, reports the following military situation in the last 24 hours:

Qandahar: As a result of the mopping up operations that were carried out by the security forces in response to the plundering action by the highway robbers in the Chaman region, 15 extremists supported by Pakistan and the United States were killed. Three recoilless guns and 37 light weapons belonging to the them were destroyed, and more than 2,000 shells for light weapons, 31 [word indistinct], 17 shells for recoilless guns, and 3 rocket projectiles were seized by the security forces.

Balkh: In reciprocal operations carried out in some parts of Balkh Province to foil the efforts of the warmongering extremists, two terrorists were killed and a light machinegun and two Kalashnikov's were seized by the security forces.

As a result of operations carried out in the village of Hayrat Kur, 10 warmongering elements were killed and 8 injured. Three of them, together with a machinegun and two Kalashnikovs, were seized by the Armed Forces. During these operations a soldier was slightly injured.

Herat: As a result of mopping up operations in some parts of Gozareh District, Herat Province, 17 warmongering extremists, including one of their ringleaders, were crushed and 8 others with 8 Kalashnikovs, a rocket launcher, and a heavy machinegun were arrested.

In the course of a separate operation by the Armed Forces in Enjil District, four extremists were crushed and four light machineguns were seized. As a result of mopping up operations by the Armed Forces, (Atequllah) and ('Abdul Hadi), ringleaders of the extremists Gulbuddin group, and a number of the group's members were crushed.

Nangarhar: The criminal extremists fired heavy weapons at security posts and residential areas of Jalalabad city, which did not cause any loss of life.

According to another report, in line with the process of voluntarily joining the Armed Forces, in the past 24 hours 156 youths reported to the military commissariats of the country's center and provinces and were sent to the relevant units and companies after registering their names.

Rebels in Faryab Join National Reconciliation

LD2202104589 Kabul BAKHTAR in English
0454 GMT 22 Feb 89

[Text] Kabul, Feb. 21, BAKHTAR—A 24 person armed opposition group headed by Safi Ekramuddin, which was busy carrying out armed activities in Faryab Province, gave up its armed activities and joined the policy of national reconciliation today.

BAKHTAR military correspondent reports that the group was given a warm welcome by Faryab state and party authorities.

Reciprocally Safi Ekrammudin leader of the group promised not to spare any effort to secure peace and tranquility and work towards realisation of the policy of national reconciliation in their areas.

Senate Meets, Reviews State of Emergency Decree

LD2802091689 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0430 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Kabul, Feb 27, BAKHTAR—Presided over by Dr Mahmud Habibi, the speaker of the Senate, the plenary session of the Senate of the National Assembly was convened with the presence of local and foreign journalists. At the outset, a few verses of holy Koran were recited. Then, the decree of President Najibullah on the state of emergency was read out.

Later, Dr Mahmud Habibi talked about the declaration of the state of emergency, the law on the state of emergency, the law on Defence Supreme Council. He singled out the necessity of these measures for the ever-further realisation of the policy of national reconciliation, defending the independence of the country independently as well as for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. Twelve senators also spoke about the necessity of the declaration of the state of emergency.

The senators described the formation of shura and the so-called government by the extremist opposition in a foreign country as a gross interference into the internal affairs of Afghanistan. The speakers described it as another effort in hampering the establishment of a really coalition government with broad basis. They also described the utterances made by Ghulam Ishaq Khan on the formation of a confederation between Pakistan and Afghanistan irresponsible and an empty one.

The Senate also assigned a commission for the preparation of a declaration on the necessity of the proclamation of the state of emergency as well as on the irresponsible assertions of the president of Pakistan.

Sayyaf Views Government Formation, 'Islamic Life'

JN2702185689 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 26 Feb 89 pp 1, 21

[By Isma'il al-Fakhrani]

[Text] Rawalpindi—AL-ITTIHAD continues its exclusive interviews with leaders of the transitional Afghan mujahidin government. The day before yesterday, it conducted an interview with 'Abdul Rasul Sayyaf after being elected prime minister by the shura.

He said that the most important objective of the mujahidin after liberating Afghanistan will be to found a safe Islamic life. He asserted that the mujahidin government will not find any major problem that will obstruct it from achieving its goals, and that there will be no confrontation with any outside parties, except for secret conspiracies. He also confirmed that the transfer of power will be done calmly and that all doors are closed to former King Zahir Shah's return, unless he wants to live as an ordinary citizen.

Sayyaf told AL-ITTIHAD that the most important task after liberation will be to found the desired Islamic state in which everyone will know they are living in a Muslim state which enjoys a life which all Muslim hearts everywhere long for. This will be followed by the rebuilding of Afghanistan after all the damage and destruction. It needs almost complete rebuilding and this will require the assistance of Muslim brothers. Also, one of the priorities that preoccupies us is people's living conditions, particularly those of orphans, widows, and the disabled. Following that, we will also be concerned with raising a conscious Muslim generation which will preserve the fruits and results of the jihad.

Answering a question on the biggest problem they expect and how they are going to face it, Sayyaf said that, God willing, we will not face many problems because our people will respond to us and we will not face any problem inside Afghanistan. I do not believe we will face confrontations with outside forces. However, conspiracies and plots will continue in secret more than in public and there will be no confrontation with us, God willing.

Sayyaf added that the government is cohesive and getting stronger. This holy war, which lasted for 12 years, will require months until we reach a decisive fateful result. Thanks to God, we have managed to unite our word in 15 days. In my opinion this is an acceleration in achieving success. My impressions are good and I expect the government to be able to control things and achieve security and stability in Afghanistan.

Sayyaf pointed out that problems in forming a government have ended. However, he added, it is human nature to have marginal differences of opinions and ideas. We as human beings differ in the manner in which we view subjects and solve problems. I want to assert that these marginal differences do not reach the principles and the general and basic issues. This happens among all human beings, so why should we be surprised if it happens among the mujahidin?

Answering a question on whether the mujahidin have created a law to determine the powers of the head of state and the prime minister, he said that they had. But, he added that this needs further clarification and detailing and that therefore, they will not talk about it until it is completed. He explained that the law was aimed originally at determining the power of the shura and government command council and things have changed now to where there is a head of state and a prime minister. Therefore, draft laws can be further clarified.

The prime minister of the Afghan transitional government confirmed that any Afghan communists who surrender will be granted amnesty, adding that thousands have already surrendered and "become good examples in our ranks." He said that due to the fact that the Soviet Union is a neighbor, there can be relations of neighborliness within the framework allowed by Islam. He repeated the mujahidin's view that power will be transferred to them calmly and in an atmosphere of security; otherwise, they will have to use arms and force.

Regarding the return of former King Zahir Shah, he said that not even the name of Zahir Shah is mentioned now because he has no access in Afghanistan but the government will think about the matter if he wants to live as an ordinary citizen in the country. But all doors will be closed before him as a person who wants to deal in politics.

Regarding the nature of the mujahidin state and the form of government, he was content to say: We do not consider any of the modern terms. We are only an Islamic state. He explained that the Islamic reformation of the Afghan individual will be done step by step and that school curriculum, media policies, and all other curriculum will be restored to the Islamic system in order to achieve those objectives.

He said that refugees will begin to return when there is a confidence that the Islamic rule is stable and when the security situation becomes stable.

At the conclusion of the interview AL-ITTIHAD asked him: Why do some people accuse him of fanaticism? He said: I am not a fanatic. However, in my political and private life, I do not want to violate the guidelines of Islam. As best as I can, I try to observe and follow the guidelines and rules of Islam. Regrettably, he who pursues an Islamic life is accused of fanaticism. We are Muslims and we are required to practice these rules in our life and this is what makes people accuse me of fanaticism, although I fall short of that.

Hikmatyar Details 'Islamic Government' Goals

PM2802103789 Jeddah 'UKAZ in Arabic 21 Feb 89 p 5

[Interview with Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, Islamic Party leader, by Muhammad Mahjub in Islamabad on 20 February]

[Excerpts] [Mahjub] What has been achieved in the shura session today, especially in the light of reports about severe disputes in the council?

[Hikmatyar] There are no major disputes. I can say that some brothers want to repeat previous proposals which we have discussed many times but reached no agreement on. They were rejected by everyone. And under these circumstances some brothers still insist on their previous position, even though we agreed to a provisional government under Ahmad Shah. That government was supposed to have derived its legitimacy from the shura council. We discussed the issue calmly and made some proposals to the council. Discussions are continuing. [passage omitted]

[Mahjub] Some observers see the Najibullah regime digging in while the mujahidin continue to differ among themselves. Do you not take the same view, given that the mujahidin are ignoring what is most important?

[Hikmatyar] The mujahidin's problems will, God willing, be resolved. But in no way will the Kabul government be able to continue or resist the mujahidin.

[Mahjub] It is being reported that the Kabul regime has made contacts with some regional powers about forming a coalition government. What is your comment?

[Hikmatyar] The Kabul government is trying to make contacts with a number of states for help. But the coalition government idea is impractical and acceptable to no one. It is rejected by the mujahidin.

[Mahjub] And what is the position of the eight Iran-based Afghan parties? Do you think they will constitute an obstacle in the future?

[Hikmatyar] No. God willing, we will have them with us. They cannot stay apart from us. We will include them in a provisional government and allocate four ministries to them, God willing.

[Mahjub] When will they take part?

[Hikmatyar] I think it is difficult for them to participate in the council at present. But they are likely to join us in a provisional government and be allocated a number of ministries.

[Mahjub] Have they agreed to that?

[Hikmatyar] No, they have not, but we hope they will. [passage omitted]

[Mahjub] When do you expect Kabul to fall?

[Hikmatyar] In the very near future.

[Mahjub] How are your military preparations going?

[Hikmatyar] We could conquer Kabul and the other cities by force, but we want to avoid bloodshed. So we are trying to capture the cities by other means and without a major offensive. The Najibullah government has only weeks to live, God willing.

[Mahjub] How do you see the future regime in Afghanistan?

[Hikmatyar] It will, God willing, be an Islamic government under mujahidin control. The Najibullah government is unable to control one single inch of Afghanistan.

[Mahjub] There are reports that the seven parties of the alliance are divided among themselves into two groups: one supporting the application of the shari'ah, and the other in favor of a secular government.

[Hikmatyar] I can say that no one can announce anything other than what the people want, that is the establishment of Islamic rule in Afghanistan—nothing but an Islamic government.

[Mahjub] Do you see the next government as being closed, or as open to the world to benefit from its expertise?

[Hikmatyar] We are trying to benefit from the Islamic states' expertise, and that is sufficient in present circumstances. We are not a developed state, we need to seek high-level expertise. I believe that the Islamic states can help us, and that is sufficient.

[Mahjub] So you will be relying on yourselves and the Islamic world alone?

[Hikmatyar] Yes, God willing.

[Mahjub] How will your relations be with the Soviets and the neighboring states?

[Hikmatyar] We seek to maintain good relations with all states, provided that they do not interfere in our internal affairs or try to impose their agents on us.

[Mahjub] Will you establish relations with Moscow and open an embassy for it?

[Hikmatyar] With Moscow? It is possible, but on condition that Moscow declares that its invasion of Afghanistan was a mistake, promises not to repeat that mistake, and pays compensation for what we have lost in the war. [passage omitted]

[Mahjub] Will the state of Afghanistan adopt party pluralism?

[Hikmatyar] Yes. This is already a reality. We want to unite our ranks, but we must accept this reality. There are a number of organizations, and we do not want to dissolve them by force. Anyone who wants to remain as a force competing and calling for the common good can do so as an organization.

Bangladesh

Parliament Discusses Rushdie's 'Satanic Verses'

BK2702044089 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 0110 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] The Jatiya Sangsad [Parliament] resumed its session this morning. Yesterday, in the evening sitting, there was short discussion on the book, "The Satanic Verses" written by British writer Salman Rushdie. The notice was moved by member, Nur Alam Jikku. Moving his motion Mr Jikku said the book has touched the religious sentiments of the Muslims world over for blasphemous statements against Islam and the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad—sallallahu alaihi wasallam [peace be upon him].

Replying to the notice, Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Home Affairs Prof M.A. Matin said the government had immediately banned the book about 4 months [ago] and written to the publishers to withdraw the book from the market. He demanded maximum punishment for Salman Rushdie, author of the infamous book, subject to lawfully held trial. He said there is no compromise with those who were trying to undermine the Holy Koran, the greatest prophet, Muhammad—sallallahu alaihi wasallam—and hurt the religious sentiments of the Muslims.

Leader of the opposition, A.S.M. Abdul Rab, said the book is a Zionist conspiracy to divide the world opinion who rank their support for the establishment of the Palestinian state. He said diplomatic relations have been disturbed, which is [words indistinct] the international public opinion censuring the book. Mr Rab demanded punishment of Salman Rushdie. Mian Abbasuddin, an independent member also spoke.

Earlier, the House passed the Bangladesh Debt Settlement Bill, and Hill Districts Repeal and Application of Law and Special Regulations Bill 1989.

President Ershad Returns From Hirohito Funeral

BK2702160189 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] President Ershad returned to Dhaka tonight after attending the state funeral of Emperor Hirohito in Tokyo. During his stay in the Japanese capital the president met Emperor Akihito and Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita. President Ershad also held informal talks with a number of world leaders who were in Tokyo to attend the funeral of Hirohito.

Chinese Water Experts Meet Flood Control Minister

BK2002130589 Dhaka Overseas Service in English 1230 GMT 20 Feb 89

[Text] The leader of the visiting Chinese experts group on flood control, Wang Shouqiang, says they will study ways of reducing the menace of floods in Bangladesh. He said this when he met the irrigation and flood control minister, Mahbubur Rahman, in Dhaka on Sunday. During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to mutual interest and benefit, with particular emphasis on water management and flood control measures.

The Chinese experts group in their 3-week stay will visit some of the flood-hit areas and irrigation projects in the country. They will also have extensive talks with concerned officials.

Agreement Signed for Jute Exports to USSR

BK2102134189 Dhaka Overseas Service in English 1230 GMT 21 Feb 89

[Text] Bangladesh will export jute goods worth about 150 million taka to the Soviet Union. An agreement to this effect was signed in Dhaka yesterday.

India

1 Killed in Srinagar Protest Against Rushdie

BK2702091489 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, one person, Ishaq Khan, was killed at (Maisooma Bazaar) in Srinagar, when a hand grenade was thrown on a police party, which was preventing miscreants from forcing shopkeepers to close their shops. They were demonstrating against the controversial book, "The Satanic Verses." Five persons were injured in the incident. They include a DSP [deputy superintendent of police] and a news photographer. The divisional commissioner told our correspondent that there were stray incidents of stone pelting in the downtown area of the city. He said the situation is under control.

In Jammu, the chief minister, Dr Abdullah, made a statement about the incident in the legislative assembly.

Home Ministry Spokesman Comments on Rushdie

BK2502092689 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] The Center has reviewed the situation arising out of the controversy over the publication of Salman Rushdie's book "The Satanic Verses." The home minister, Mr Buta Singh, discussed the situation late last night with senior officials. He also contacted the Maharashtra chief minister and requested him to take all preventive measures for maintaining peace. The government has urged members of all communities to be aware of the attempts of certain elements to use the controversy to whip up passions and asked them to make the best efforts for maintaining peace and communal harmony.

A spokesman of the Home Ministry said that India is a secular country and the government has always respected all religions. It is in line with this policy that India imposed a ban on the book so that the religious sentiments of any community were not hurt. India was the first country to ban the book.

AFP: Debate Over 'Satanic Verses' Continues

BK2502121889 Hong Kong AFP in English 1201 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] New Delhi, Feb 25 (AFP)—India's ruling Congress (I) Party Saturday criticised Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni's call to kill Indian-born author Salman Rushdie for his book "The Satanic Verses."

"We never subscribe to the views expressed by people who want a terrorist or violent action against an individual," Congress (I) General Secretary K.N. Singh told reporters here.

"We are followers of Mahatma (Mohandas) Gandhi... we always deprecated violence and terrorism of all kind, individual or state," he added, when asked to comment about Ayatollah Khomeyni's call for Mr Rushdie's death.

The statement came a day after 12 people were killed and more than 50 injured, three critically, during protests over the book in the western port city of Bombay, where Mr Rushdie, now a British citizen, was born.

India, which has some 100 million Moslems, was the first country to ban "The Satanic Verses", which many Moslems say blasphemes Islam. It has since been banned in several other countries.

Without naming anyone, Mr Singh accused "some people" of provoking religious minorities "to go for action ... even though the government of India has already taken a stand on the book."

Also Friday, an influential Moslem leader here, Maulana Syed Abdullah Bukhari, described Ayatollah Khomeyni's call for Mr Rushdie's execution as "an order of God" and said it should be carried out. "We shall take a vow not to show any leniency to such people. We may suppress our feelings for some time, but then it will burst like a volcano, spilling death and destruction," newspapers quoted Syed Bukhari, chief priest of Delhi's biggest mosque, as saying.

He also reportedly praised Ayatollah Khomeyni for shaking "the most powerful nations like America, the United Kingdom and France" with his execution appeal. "The enemies of Islam will remember this for all times to come."

The pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) condemned Syed Bukhari's remarks and pressed the government to take "stringent steps to maintain peace and crush mischievous elements" protesting against Mr Rushdie's book. A party statement said the situation in Bombay and elsewhere in the country was assuming "serious proportions".

The trouble in Bombay began when Moslems responding to a strike call by an association of local Moslem groups tried to protest outside the British Deputy High Commission there. Clashes erupted when the demonstrators were blocked by police, who opened fire on the protestors after reportedly coming under pistol fire and a barrage of stones and bottles.

Bombay was quiet Saturday. The PRESS TRUST OF INDIA (PTI) said police and paramilitary forces had stepped up patrolling in the riot-hit districts as well as "other sensitive areas" of the city.

Shevardnadze Plan on Palestine Issue Supported

BK2402155689 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 24 Feb 89

[Text] India has fully supported the three-point peace plan announced by the Soviet foreign minister, Mr Shevardnadze, to resolve the Palestinian issue. The plan envisages the UN Security Council to discuss convening of an international conference on Palestine.

An External Affairs Ministry spokesman said in New Delhi that India always believes that the Palestine question can be resolved only through a UN-sponsored international conference with the participation of all the concerned parties.

Turkish President Concludes Visit, Departs 26 Feb

BK2602090489 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] The president of Turkey, Mr Kenan Evren, left Bombay this morning after a 5-day state visit to India.

In a message to the president, Mr R. Venkataraman, before his departure, Mr Evren expressed his gratitude for the warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation. He said he had free and frank discussions with the Indian leaders on bilateral and international matters and the deliberations were most productive.

The Turkish president expressed the hope that the talks will open a new stage in developing the existing friendly relations between the two countries.

Iraqi Envoy Delivers Message to Gandhi 24 Feb

JN2402124489 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1135 GMT 24 Feb 89

[Excerpt] New Delhi, 24 Feb (INA)—Nizar Hamdun, President Saddam Husayn's personal envoy and Foreign Ministry under secretary, has conveyed a message from his excellency to Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi dealing with bilateral relations during a meeting today between Rajiv Gandhi and the Foreign Ministry under secretary here today. [passage omitted]

Addresses News Conference

JN2502191489 Baghdad INA in English 1530 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 25, INA—Addressing a crowded press conference, attended by Indian and foreign media, Nizar Hamdun, undersecretary of Iraqi Foreign Ministry and special envoy of President Saddam Husayn, told newsmen that Iraq was deeply interested in further strengthening political and economic ties with India.

Ambassador Hamdun said he had dialogue with Indian leaders for expansion of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. He pointedly said that "the infrastructure of Iraqi economy is still intact and an economic plan as proposed by President Husayn, is well underway."

Ambassador 'Abd al-Wadud al-Shaykhali was also present at the press conference.

Meanwhile, vast coverage was provided by Indian media to Ambassador Hamdun's press conference. Indian radio and television networks treated it as an important story in their national news hookups. Almost all major Indian newspapers also gave it very prominent coverage, highlighting close Indo-Iraqi relations and Iraq's just stand regarding ceasefire.

UN's Perez de Cuellar Arrives on 6-Day Visit

BK2702032989 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] The UN secretary general, Mr Javier Perez de Cuellar, arrived in New Delhi last night on a 6-day visit to the country. Mr [Perez] de Cuellar was received at the airport by the minister of state for external affairs, Mr Natwar Singh.

Mr de Cuellar will receive the prestigious Jawahar Lal Nehru award for international understanding from the president, Mr R. Venkataraman, in the capital today. The award carries a cash prize of 15 lakh rupees, a citation, and a scroll.

During his stay, Mr de Cuellar will have wide-ranging talks with the prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi.

Civil Aviation Cooperation With CSSR Planned

BK2402152489 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1430 GMT 24 Feb 89

[Text] India and Czechoslovakia have explored the possibility of cooperation in the field of civil aviation. The minister of state for civil aviation, Mr Shiv Raj Patil, and the Czechoslovak foreign trade minister, Mr Jan Sterba, during discussions in New Delhi today, agreed that there is vast scope for such cooperation between the two countries.

The visiting foreign trade minister also offered to sell its country's planes to India, particularly for possible use by the feeder airlines.

Cooperation Protocol Signed

BK2502040489 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] India and Czechoslovakia have agreed to promote new forms of cooperation like joint ventures. They agreed to pursue the question of cooperation in third-country projects in civil construction and erection of thermal power stations, especially in Iran and Iraq. A protocol to this effect was signed in New Delhi by the commerce minister, Mr Dinesh Singh, and the visiting Czechoslovak minister for foreign trade, Mr Jan Sterba, last evening. The two sides decided in principle to conclude a new long-term trade protocol covering the period 1991-94.

Reportage on Response to Gandhi Remarks on Punjab

Opposition Walks Out

BK2702082989 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Most of the opposition staged a walkout in the Lok Sabha during question hour today in protest against the prime minister's charge that the opposition, barring the CPI-M, supported the terrorists in Punjab. The prime minister asserted that he will not retract a word from his charge and said a member of the Janata Dal and National Front had supported Khalistan. He wanted to know what action the opposition had taken against the member. Mr Gandhi asked pointedly whether they were willing to expel him. The prime minister observed that truth can be very hard sometimes but it must be faced.

The home minister, Mr Buta Singh, remarked that the opposition was walking out in favor of someone who supported Khalistan. This is a heinous matter and we condemn it. The row was sparked off by a question relating to the government policy regarding grant of extension to IAS [Indian Administrative Service] and IPS [Indian Police Service] officers.

The minister of state for home, Mr P. Chidambaram, told the house that extensions were given only in exceptional circumstances and strictly in public interest. He asserted that no other consideration like favoritism or bias marked the government decision. Replying to a supplementary, the minister said extension had been granted to the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] director as the organization was handling several sensitive matters. These include investigation and prosecution of terrorist cases in Punjab, for which the CBI is the [word indistinct] agency.

Apology Sought From Gandhi

BK2702161989 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Excerpt] The minister of state for parliamentary affairs and minister of state in the Prime Minister's Office, Mrs Sheila Dikshit, has termed the walk out by the opposition from the Lok Sabha this morning as unfortunate. In a statement in the Lok Sabha she clarified that the prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, did not charge the entire opposition with supporting terrorism in Punjab. His remarks were limited to an opposition leader's support for the so-called Khalistan. In fact, the prime minister has specially appreciated the role of some opposition parties in combating terrorism.

Describing the opposition walkout as a part of politically motivated strategy, Mrs Dikshit expressed the hope that with this clarification the opposition will come back and join the proceedings of the house.

A similar clarification was made by the energy minister, Mr Vasant Sathe, in the Rajya Sabha.

Earlier, in a joint statement the opposition announced that they will not participate in the Lok Sabha proceedings unless the prime minister makes appropriate amends to his statement. The signatories to the statement belonged to Telugu Desam, Janata, CPI-M, AGP [Asom Gana Parishad], Congress-S, Forward Bloc, RSP [Revolutionary Socialist Party], DMK, Akali Dal, CPI, BJP, Muslim League, and a faction of the AIADMK. [passage omitted]

Opposition Walks Out Again

BK2802084689 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] The Rajya Sabha today witnessed uproarious scenes when the proceedings during question hour were stalled by the opposition over the reported remarks of the prime minister in the Lok Sabha yesterday about the opposition. As soon as the house assembled at 1100 this morning, Mr M.S. Gurupadaswamy, Janata, demanded that the prime minister should withdraw his remarks unconditionally. He was supported by several other opposition members. They demanded that the question hour be suspended to discuss the issue.

The prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, who was present in the house, told the opposition that if they read what he had said in the other house, the position will be clear. He said he has not questioned the patriotism or nationalism of the opposition. He made it clear that he had no hesitation in correcting himself whenever he had gone wrong. But, in the present case, he has said nothing wrong, Mr Gandhi added. Mr Gandhi said if the house desires, he and his party will welcome a substantive discussion on linkages with terrorists of certain opposition members.

But the opposition was not satisfied and went on pressing for an unconditional apology by the prime minister. This went on for quite some time amid shouts from the opposition and treasury benches. The chairman, Mr Shankar Dayal Sharma, ruled that a matter of the other house cannot be raised in the Rajya Sabha and he will not allow the suspension of the question hour. He said if the opposition so demands, there are other ways to discuss the issue in the house.

Several opposition members said the prime minister's remarks have led to tension between the opposition and the government and the prime minister should restore confidence and create an atmosphere of smooth conduct of proceedings. Unless this is done, the proceedings of the house cannot go on smoothly.

The entire opposition, barring the National Conference, at this stage walked out.

In the Lok Sabha, most of the opposition abstained from the proceedings today when the house assembled in the morning.

Gandhi on 'Erroneous Remarks'

BK2802090689 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] The prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, has called upon the opposition to take a positive stand on the issue of terrorism in Punjab. Referring to his remarks during the question hour in the Lok Sabha yesterday, Mr Gandhi said that certain erroneous remarks have been attributed to him in a section of the press. In a brief statement in the Lok Sabha today, the prime minister said at no stage he had said that the opposition was unpatriotic. The prime minister reiterated that one opposition member was raising the issue of the so-called Khalistan time and again and he only wanted the opposition to take action against that member. He said the left parties had been fighting against terrorism along with the Congress-I. Apart from the left parties and the Congress-I, many other people from different parties have also been killed and our hearts go out to them. They have stood and fought for the unity and integrity of the nation.

Mr Gandhi said that if the opposition wanted to come out clean on the issue of terrorism, they must take a positive stand on the issue. Mr Gandhi also said that if anything he had said had hurt the feelings of the members he is sorry for that. The prime minister made it clear that he has never accused the opposition of raising the issue of the so-called Khalistan.

Earlier, during the zero-hour, the speaker Mr Bal Ram Jakhar, appealed to both the ruling party and opposition to sit together and sort out their differences over the remarks made by the prime minister yesterday during the question time. The speaker was responding to a suggestion by Prof Saifuddin Soz, National Conference, who urged Mr Jakhar to use his good offices in this matter in the overall interest of parliamentary democracy.

Most of the opposition members had not attended the proceedings in the Lok Sabha till 1300 [0730 GMT] when the house adjourned for lunch.

Gandhi Denies Central Government Bypassing States

BK2802041489 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] The prime minister has made it clear that the ongoing exercises about Panchayati Raj [system of village-level administration] are not intended to weaken the states but to give more power to the people. Mr Rajiv Gandhi was giving the valedictory address at the national conference on Panchayati Raj and scheduled castes [low caste people], which ended in New Delhi last night.

Referring to the attitude of some opposition-ruled states, Mr Gandhi denied that the Center is bypassing them in any way by holding consultations with their officials and local representatives. The only intention is to strengthen the hands of the people, he said. It is not a question between the Center and the states or the Congress-I and the opposition, but the people on the one hand and power brokers and vested interests on the other. The common man has to be adequately armed to fight these forces. Mr Gandhi regretted that all efforts to eliminate these inimical groups, while planning from Delhi, have failed. It has now been learned that the real fight has to be waged at the grassroots level and by the people themselves.

The prime minister pointed out that the Panchayati Raj systems being followed in various states are inadequate. He said he will hold talks with the chief ministers before bringing forward a comprehensive legislation on the subject. The prime minister told the 700 scheduled caste representatives from all over the country that their suggestions will receive top priority while formulating the law. He said the government is committed to secure justice for the scheduled castes through democratic means. He also informed the gathering that another national debate will be initiated on the question of due and timely justice in the country.

Earlier, representatives from various states made several suggestions on the structure and role of panchayat bodies and the status and responsibility of scheduled caste people in these setups. Direct and timely elections to panchayati institutions, more financial resources, three-tier system, and reservation in some panchayati posts were some of the recommendations. The welfare minister, Dr Rajendra Kumari Bajpai, remarked that the suggestions indicate the serious thought given by the delegates to the issue.

2 'Terrorists' Killed, 12 Arrested in Punjab

BK2602034089 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] In Punjab, two terrorists were killed in an encounter with security forces last night. In Rupar District, a hardcore terrorist, Surendra Singh, was killed in an encounter in the village Sahora. Some arms and ammunition were recovered from the killed terrorist.

In Amritsar District, one of the two terrorists, who fired at a police party near village Sarhala, was killed when police opened fire. The other terrorist escaped. One sten gun and some ammunition were recovered from the site of the encounter. Security forces have arrested 12 terrorists during the raids in Majitha area of Amritsar District. This gang was responsible in a number of terrorist crimes, including murders in Amritsar District.

Meanwhile, thousands of people belonging to all walks of life participated in a peace march organized by the state unit of the Communist Party of India in Bhatinda yesterday. The party general secretary, Mr C. Rajeshwar Rao and Secretary Mr Avtar Singh Malhotra, led the peace march. The participants carried placards in favor of communal harmony and raised slogans against separatist and communal elements.

Security Increased in Assam After Strike Call

BK2802033789 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] The Assam government has geared up security measures in all the sensitive areas in view of the two consecutive bundh [strike] calls given by the Plains Tribal Council of Assam and the Bodo Students Union from today. The Army has been alerted to assist the administration. The Northeast Frontier Railway has also canceled its train services in lower Assam during the bundh. Other trains from New Delhi and Calcutta will be terminated respectively at New Jalpaiguri and New Cooch Behar.

Oil, Gas Found in Andhra Pradesh Basin Area

BK2502093289 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] In the Krishna-Godavari basin of Andhra Pradesh, oil and gas have been struck in the second well at Bantumilli. The well is yielding about 150 barrels of oil and 23,000 cubic meters of gas a day. Exploration activities are also continuing in other areas, like Razole, Narsapuram, Tantipaka, Pasarlapudi and Amalapuram. Out of 81 wells drilled so far in the area, oil and gas have been struck in 30 wells.

Iran

UK Foreign Office on Severing Ties With Tehran

LD2702175289 Tehran IRNA in English 1728 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] London, Feb. 27, IRNA—Having no relations would make it "extremely difficult" for Britain and Iran to get together again, the Foreign Office has said in its first comment since the Iranian Majlis moved Sunday to consider severing ties.

A ministry spokesman told IRNA Monday that the decision to cut relations was a matter for Iran as Britain was "not choosing to break relations."

The Foreign Office position now was "not seeking sanctions or any further retaliation". Its choice had been only to have put ties "into cold storage," he explained.

Last week the British Government decided to withdraw its three diplomats and two technicians from its Embassy in Iran, while notifying the Iranian charge d'affaires in London that his presence was not desired in the current climate.

The move was prompted by the deepening rift between the two countries over the continued publication in Britain of "The Satanic Verses" that is considered blasphemous to Islam, and Iran's demand to bring its British resident author Salman Rushdie to justice.

In a debate at Tehran University Monday, Majlis Foreign Relations Committee member Qorban 'Ali Saleh-Abadi predicted that deputies were likely to vote in favor of the emergency bill proposed by 100 members, in Tuesday's session. "God willing, we will approve this bill tomorrow," he said.

Britain had removed "virtually all substance" from its relationship with Tehran but consideration of the issue by the Majlis "seemed to be governed by domestic politics" as much as anything else, said the Foreign Office spokesman who is not named according to custom.

"If you have diplomatic relations, at least you have your first foot on the ladder so if a time comes when you mutually agree you can (improve ties)," he said in reference to Britain's decision to withdraw its diplomats but to maintain ties.

Britain last week gained the support of the European Community in Brussels to withdraw their senior envoys from Tehran in the escalating crisis, but still insisted it was seeking further moves to pressure iran.

Reportage on Majlis Vote To Sever Ties With UK

Khalkhali To Back Bill

LD2802065489 Tehran IRNA in English 0645 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 28, IRNA—Head of the Majlis Foreign Relations Committee Hojjat ol-Eslam Sadeq Khalkhali has said he would "wholeheartedly" vote today for a bill to sever relations with London.

Two newspapers meanwhile attacked West Germany's role in the continuing row over "The Satanic Verses".

"I will wholeheartedly give a positive vote for the... bill," Khalkhali told the daily ABRAR published Tuesday [28 February]. "There is nothing but humiliation in this relationship and I'm confident the bill will be approved," he told the ABRAR published Tuesday.

The Majlis is to start debate this morning on the bill, proposed by over 100 deputies to protest against Britain's attitude in the crisis over the blasphemous book written by Indian-born British novelist Salman Rushdie.

In an editorial, ABRAR said the move was designed not only against Britain but also a warning to its allies. "The decision to break off relations with Britain, a country which acts as the leader of the anti-Islamic movement in the Western world, is a warning to other countries that have become the plaything of London and Washington." It said the Majlis should "reiterate on the uncompromising nature of the revolution" by giving its final approval to the bill.

The daily JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI meanwhile said it hoped that Iran's cut in ties would be permanent. "It is hoped the Majlis (approval) would be a serious, compulsory and irreversible order so that sly, deceitful Britons would not ask for resumption of ties when the world political conditions changed."

The paper in a new attack against West Germany, said in its main editorial that the position taken by Bonn in the crisis called for the government to consider giving a proper response. "The Muslim people of Iran want the Government of the Islamic Republic to consider it a duty to show a firm and proper response against the German Government in insulting Islamic sanctities." Bonn should know that hurting Muslim feelings "would lead to unpleasant consequences," it added.

West Germany, which strongly supported Britain's move in the European Community to recall diplomatic envoys from Tehran, has also spoken of the possibility of imposing economic sanctions and has cancelled a planned visit by two of its ministers to Tehran.

The English-language TEHRAN TIMES said Bonn had been dragged by Washington in a "whirlpool of rash anti-Iran policies." It warned that the "serious consequences" of these policies would hit Germany particularly in the economic sphere. "The fact that Iran's large market is a fantastic market for Western Europe can never be forgone [as received]," it said in its editorial.

Majlis Votes To Break Relations

LD2802075089 Tehran IRNA in English 0748 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 28, IRNA—Nearly all Majlis deputies present in Tuesday's [28 February] session voted in favor of the framework of a bill demanding a break in ties with Britain.

"We agree with the proposal and in future this will be our stand towards any country which attacks Islam and Islamic sanctities," said Foreign Minister Dr 'Ali Akbar Velayati before the vote.

In the standing vote all except two or three deputies, among the 201 present, stood up and celebrated their first round victory with Salawat, traditional cries praising the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and his descendants.

UK Has 1 Week 'To Reconsider'

LD2802081889 Tehran IRNA in English 0815 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 28, IRNA—The Iranian Majlis Tuesday gave Britain a week to reconsider its "unprincipled" stand on the contents of "The Satanic Verses" before ordering the Foreign Ministry to cut off all diplomatic ties.

Relations between the two countries would be automatically severed if there was no response from London a week after the bill became law.

The proposal is before the Council of Guardians for final approval.

The Majlis had earlier voted on the breaking of ties in principle but in the debate on the details of the bill, a number of deputies proposed that the bill should include an ultimatum to britain to revise its position.

The bill approved by the Majlis states:

"From the date of the approval of this law, if the British Government does not officially declare in a maximum period of a week, its opposition to the unprincipled stands against the world of Islam, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the contents of the anti-Islamic book 'The Satanic Verses', the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran is obliged to break all bilateral political ties."

Britain last week withdrew all five of its diplomatic staff from Tehran after a meeting of European Community foreign ministers.

The 12-Nation EC decided to recall ambassadors for consultations in protest against Imam Khomeyni's fatwah sanctioning the execution of novelist Salman Rushdie whose book "The Satanic Verses" has been condemned in the Muslim world as blasphemous.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry responded by calling home its envoys in EC countries.

Angered by Britain's leadership of the campaign, more than 100 Majlis deputies proposed a bill Sunday to cut diplomatic ties with London, who reopened its embassy in Tehran only last December after nine years.

The proposal to give Britain a week to change its position was debated by a number of Majlis deputies, in contrast to the original bill demanding immediate break in ties which was approved in its first reading almost unanimously.

The ultimatum was approved by more than 100 of the 180 deputies present. The first reading of the original proposal was debated by 201 deputies earlier and approved with almost unanimous support. The Majlis is designed for 270 members but not all deputies have had their credentials approved following the spring elections and others were on leave.

"This proposal is very good" giving Britain a week to reconsider, Majlis Speaker Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said before the proposal was put to a standing vote.

Foreign Minister Velayati who was invited to give the government's view on the bill, said he approved the diplomatic move against Britain.

"As the person responsible for the Foreign Ministry, I approve this serious initiative of the respectable Islamic Consultative Majlis," he said.

It was unbearable for Iran to see that the very foundations of Islam was being attacked by a "mercenary", like British novelist Salman Rushdie.

But he said Iran had tried in recent years to avoid as much as possible any "hurried and raw" decisions and to tread in the middle between immediate and long term interests of the Islamic revolution.

"Safeguarding the interests of Islam, the revolution and the Islamic Republic... is not an easy job," he remarked. "We can... have ties and guard islam's interests, bear all light and heavy pressures... and make decisions that would minimize the pressure on our revolutionary nation... so that it can stand up and defend the interests of Islam and the revolution in the world."

On the other hand, he went on, "supporting the Muslims and the oppressed in various parts of the world is among our first goals."

He called on Majlis deputies to invite him more often to give briefings on various international issues which the deputies must be aware of.

"These are the results of my long experiences in confronting existing realities in the world scene," the foreign minister said.

Speaking in support of the ultimatum, deputy from Kashan Hoseyn Mahluji said if Britain apologized and regretted the contents of "The Satanic Verses" and said it had no part in the production of the book it would be a great political victory for Iran. "Why should we block this path which could lead to our biggest political achievement," he asked.

Deputy from Saveh, Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Movahedi Savoji said the one week deadline to allow Britain "to think and decide" was short and if London remained commited to its previous stand, the Foreign Ministry would have to act on breaking ties. "We don't want to break relations with everyone," Savoji said. "We want to have healthy political, cultural, and economic ties will Muslim nations in particular and with those governments who are not hostile to us... but Britain has gone too far."

Opposing the ultimatum, Mashhad deputy and president 'Ali Khamene'i's brother, Hadi, said brave Muslims would not hesitate to take action against Britain. "A proud Muslim would not allow himself to hesitate even for one moment, let alone giving a one week chance... we must stand firm." The ultimatum would in fact allow Britain to "commit ominous acts and blame them on Muslims," he added.

Another deputy rejected accusations that Iran was against the freedom of expression, noting that there were plenty of books in bookshops in front of Tehran University where Islamic faith had been questioned with logic. "But what we're discussing here is insults."

Council of Guardians Approves

LD2802112489 Tehran IRNA in English 1115 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 28, IRNA—Relations between Iran and Britain will be broken off unless London revised its stand on the crisis over "The Satanic Verses" within a week, the Council of Guardians approved Tuesday.

The Council of six 'ulema and six lawyers said the ultimatum approved earlier by the Majlis, did not contradict Islamic law or the Constitution.

Over 100 deputies voted to give Britain a week to reconsider its "unprinciple" stand on the contents of "The Satanic Verses" before ordering the Foreign Ministry to cut off all diplomatic ties.

The remainder of the 180 deputies present voted against because they wanted an immediate break in ties which has been virtually non-existent since Britain removed all its diplomatic staff from Tehran last week. Iran has responded in kind.

Diplomatic relations would be automatically severed if there was no clear and positive response from London by next Tuesday.

The law states:

"From the date of the approval of this law, if the British Government does not officially declare in a maximum period of a week, its opposition to the unprincipled stands against the world of Islam, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the contents of the anti-Islamic book 'The Satanic Verses', the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran is obliged to break all bilateral political ties."

Early reaction from Britain was negative but there was no mention whether the government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher would reject the blasphemous contents of Salman Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses".

"It certainly doesn't alter the position that no country or no religious leader of any country has the right to incite murder on another's territory," British Foreign Office Minister Lynda Chalker told the BBC World Service Radio after the vote.

But Iran's Foreign Minister Dr 'Ali Akbar Velayati approved the Majlis decision and warned other countries that they could face the same if they supported grossly insulting material against Islam.

"We agree with the proposal," Velayati said in a speech in the Majlis before. "In future this will be our stand towards any country which attacks Islam and Islamic sanctities."

Rushdie, a naturalized British citizen, has been in hiding since Imam Khomeyni issued a fatwah two weeks ago calling on Muslims to execute him for the foul insults made against Islam's most divine figures and beliefs, in "The Satanic Verses".

The Indian-born novelist has been supported by many Western colleagues and governments but has been widely condemned in the Islamic world. About 30 Muslims have died in demonstrations in Pakistan and India, including in Bombay, Rushdie's birthplace.

In a rare attack by a well-known Western writer against Rushdie, author Roald Dahl wrote to THE TIMES newspaper in London describing Rushdie as a "dangerous opportunist".

Rushdie "clearly has a profound knowledge of the Muslim religion and its people and he must have been totally aware of the deep and violent feelings his book would stir up among devout Muslims," Dahl wrote.

Fifteen Western governments, including the 12-nation European Community have recalled their ambassadors from Tehran. Japan has so far resisted pressure to do the same. Iran has no ties with Washington, though the Bush administration has supported the EC move.

Iranian Foreign Ministry has retaliated by withdrawing its senior envoys in EC countries.

The bill to sever ties with London was originally proposed on Sunday by more than 100 deputies angered by Britain's leading role in the diplomatic campaign against Tehran. "The Satanic Verses" was first published in Britain last September.

"A proud Muslim would not allow himself to hesitate even for one moment, let alone giving a one week chance... we must stand firm," said Hojjat ol-Eslam Hadi Khamene'i, deputy from Mashhad and President 'Ali Khamene'i's brother. But in a close vote those agreeing with the ultimatum won.

"This proposal is very good" giving Britain a week to reconsider, Majlis Speaker Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said before the proposal was put to a standing vote.

The move was approved by more than 100 of the 180 deputies present. The first reading of the original proposal was debated by 201 deputies earlier and approved with almost unanimous support.

The Majlis is designed for 270 members but not all deputies have had their credentials approved following the spring elections and others were on leave.

Expressing the government's position, Foreign Minister Velayati said he approved the diplomatic move against Britain.

"As the person responsible for the Foreign Ministry, I approve this serious initiative of the respectable Islamic Consultative Majlis," he said.

It was unbearable for Iran to see that the very foundations of Islam was being attacked by a "mercenary" like British novelist Salman Rushdie. But he said Iran had tried in recent years to avoid as much as possible any "hurried and raw" decisions and to tread in the middle between immediate and long term interests of the Islamic revolution.

"Safeguarding the interests of Islam, the revolution and the Islamic Republic... is not an easy job," he remarked.

"We can... have ties and guard Islam's interests, bear all light and heavy pressures... and make decisions that would minimize the pressure on our revolutionary nation... so that it can stand up and defend the interests of Islam and the revolution in the world."

On the other hand, he went on, "supporting the Muslims and the oppressed in various parts of the world is among out first goals."

He called on Majlis deputies to invite him more often to give briefings on various international issues which the deputies must be aware of. "These are the result of my long experiences in confronting existing realities in the world scene," the foreign minister said.

Speaking in support of the ultimatum, deputy from Kashan Hoseyn Mahluji said if Britain apologized and regreted the contents of "The Satanic Verses" and said it had no part in the production of the book it would be a great political victory for Iran.

"Why should we block this path which could lead to our biggest political achievement," he asked.

Deputy from Saveh, Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Movahedi Savoji said the one week deadline to allow Britain "to think and decide" was short and if London remained commited to its previous stand, the foreign ministry would have to act on breaking ties.

"We don't want to break realtions with everyone," Savoji said. "We want to have healthy political, cultural, and economic ties will Muslim nations in particular and with those governments who are not hostile to us... but Britain has gone too far."

In the Majlis debate a deputy rejected accusations that Iran was against the freedom of expression or breaking ties with the outside world.

There were plenty of books in bookshops in front of Tehran University where Islamic faith had been questioned with logic. "But what we're discussing here is insults."

Paper Assails FRG Position

LD2802094289 Tehran IRNA in English 0912 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 28, IRNA—An Iranian daily voiced surprise over West Germany's spearheading move for imposition of economic embargo on Iran due to Salman Rushdie affair. Bonn is Iran's number one West European economic partner.

TEHRAN TIMES in an editorial today commented that "the Bonn Government is indeed dragged in a whirlpool of rash anti-Iran policies masterminded by Washington."

"An issue that lent momentum to an anti-Iran policy in Bonn," the English-language daily said, "is the appointment of the most staunch Iran-haters in the U.S. Administration Vernon Walters to the U.S. Embassy in Bonn."

The daily reminded that Bonn was the first to break the economic sanction imposed on Iran by European Community after the occupation of the U.S. Tehran Embassy in 1979 and consequently won a large portion of Iran's market.

TEHRAN TIMES also referred to the West German foreign minister's tour of Iran in November 1988 and considered it as an "orchestrated move on the part of the EEC to secure a number of things in Tehran."

But, the paper believed, "West Germany and the West in general had not obtained quite the kind of answers they were expecting from Iran."

"The serious consequences of these policies will hit Germany in various ways particularly in the economic sphere more than others who fell for not-too-subtle anti-Iran stances," TEHRAN TIMES concluded.

Tehran TV Commentary

NC2702171889 Tehran Television Service in Persian 1615 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Using as a pretext the theory that contacts and communications are fundamentally important in the contemporary world, certain political elements are claiming that Iran's isolation is due to the mistakes it made in the 1st decade of the revolution, and especially the imposed war. This is an attempt to mask the belief of those who disseminate such allegations that it is not possible for Iran to have an independent existence. This belief undoubtedly stems from a detailed analysis carried out on the basis of worldly thoughts and general materialistic interpretations and seeks to affirm that the difficulties facing the Islamic revolution are the result of mistakes by the people and erroneous policies by officials, and not because of world oppression's personal vendetta against Islam and the Muslims.

In their interpretation of the recent message by the great leader of the Islamic revolution, these elements ask: Why do the Muslim Iranian people insist on the tenets of pure Muhammadan Islam and express their anger against imperialism in their slogan of "Death to America" and in the occupation of the den of spies of the arch-Satan? These elements are, in fact, asking the people to question the slogan of "Neither East and West," and whether in the contemporary world there is any possibility of existence without dependence on the great powers.

They believe that in principle, there is no possibility of staging a revolution but only superficial reforms. The only resort, according to them, is to seek refuge—but not to have any expectations—in the arms of the powers which do not strive to bestow comfort and prosperity on them, but on a different society. The political elements which adhere to this line stress that, if the Islamic revolution were to give up its defensive attitude and animosity toward world oppression, the greater powers would, on the basis of humanitarian principles, adopt a proper attitude toward this revolution. We invite those who make such allegations to quench their thirst at the Holy Kowsar [river in Paradise] of the imam's message.

With regard to world oppression's anti-Islamic actions represented in the publication and dissemination of "The Satanic Verses," we strongly and categorically declare to those who still believe and present analyses to support their belief that we should review our diplomatic policy and principles and not repeat our past errors; to those who believe that past slogans or war are the reasons for the East and West's poor opinion of us and explain our isolation; and who believe that if we were to act realistically, they would reciprocate by adopting a more humane attitude and a more respectful position toward nations, Islam, and Muslims, that this is just one example of God's intention to have incidents such as those that occurred in the wake of the publication of "The Satanic Verses," in order to expose the true face of arrogance, oppression, and barbarism and to reveal its long-standing enmity toward Islam so that we would emerge from our simplemindedness.

We conclude with these decisive words, which reflect the final defeat of all those who are motivated by selfishness, simplemindedness, or intransigence with regard to the Islamic revolution: "As long as I live, I will not permit the government to fall into the hands of the liberals. As long as I live, I will not allow the monafeqin to obliterate the Islam of these defenseless ones. As long as I live, we will not go back on our principle of neither East nor West. As long as I live, I will cut off the hands of the United States and the Soviet Union in all fields."

'Serious Repercussions' Seen

NC1802090089 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 18 Feb 89

[Central News Unit Research group commentary]

[Text] The world of Islam is united in the grip of indignation, furor, and protest against the blasphemous act which has been manipulated by world imperialism. The dissemination of the book "The Satanic Verses" was not an incidental act, but a calculated measure to revile Islamic sanctities.

Ever since the translated preview of this book was prepared in Italy and the United States, the author has received widespread publicity throughout the world. Protests by Muslims in general, and the Muslim Iranian nation in particular, in their demonstrations yesterday prove that if the world of Islam displays a unifed and cohesive reaction politically and culturally and combats world oppression's anti-Islamic propaganda in a serious and effective manner, it can give the best warning to the infidels of the world.

The emancipating Islamic ideology has been the constant target of spite and hostility and always has encountered special anti-Islamic propaganda tactics since its advent. The logic of Islam and the Koran has never deviated from its path of reasoning and protest. It has never considered adopting a reciprocally insulting stance even against its enemies and, in the face of various (?plots), always has maintained a logical and pleasant approach.

World imperialism and Zionist propaganda, which are at the service of world oppression, endeavored by their latest action to once again attack the Muslims' deepest sentiments in a crafty manner in the guise of art and literature in order to attain their colonialist and selfish objectives. Now world oppression's latest anti-Islamic action is being attributed to the principles of freedom and human rights.

It should be noted that blasphemy toward divine religions and irreverence toward what is sacred to the Islamic religion can never be justified within the context of human rights. In fact, with regard to the principle of democracy, the respect for religious beleifs and divine religions is very important and falls within the (?context) of human rights.

On the other hand, the proponents of human rights should note that execration of the firm religious beliefs of an ummah must be distinguished from criticism and cannot be treated in the same manner in the Islamic shari'ah. In the past half century, numerous books contradicting Islamic tenets and issues have been written. However, the profane nature of the "The Satanic Verses" indicates a dangerous gambit, the serious repercussions of which undoubtedly will be inevitable.

In light of the above, the reaction of Muslims to the arcane and abhorrent act is imperative. On the other hand, the position of those governments who for years have professed Islam amid the clamor of the protests by Muslims all over will not be interpreted as anything but consent, support, and indifference to world oppression's propagation against Muslims.

In the aftermath of our revolution's victory, our country has consistently striven to foil international anti-Islamic propaganda in Islamic nations and endeavored to further strengthen the Islamic beliefs of the Muslims. Cultural imperialism has rallied all of its propagandistic resources in an attempt to stem the spread of this movement and the mode of thought of an Islamic renaissance. After 10 ineffective years, world oppression's political artifices have emerged in a literary and artistic garb in an attempt to more effectively and subtley assist in attaining its hegemonistic objectives.

The writer of "The Satanic Verses" claims that the text has been couched in the mold of art and literature so that he can refute all protests on the pretext of freedom of expression. The fact is that Salman Rushdie's book has overstepped all boundaries of mundane or artistic topics and has entered the pale of the inauspicious objectives of world oppression. It is for this reason that the Muslims have completely understood the importance of protesting against the gibberish of world oppression and mercenaries who write to order, and are displaying their worldwide reaction.

ETTELA'AT Editorial Noted

LD2602191289 Tehran IRNA in English 1855 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA—The Persian daily ETTELA'AT Saturday commented in a brief reflection on the international clamor on Salman Rushdie's novel "The Satanic Verses" saying that Iran's Muslim people now have the vantage position in a battle "against the cultural crusade of the West".

The daily said the West has traditionally but erroneously maintained that revolutions and ideologies melt away in the ruling international order only a few years or decades after their birth. It singled out communism in the Soviet Union and Mr Gorbachev's "perestroyka" as the case of a revolution, which in the opinion of the Westerners, is now experiencing a transformation at the climax of a head-on encounter with Western capitalism, a transformation which the daily describes as "baptism of Marxism in the bath-tub of the liberal ideas of the West."

ETTELA'AT said the West is now doing everything to protect the Indian born Salman Rushdie "within fortified bastions," but noted that even so the apostate feels the hovering of death over his shoulders. It said the phenomena is highly important since it speaks for an alternative universal idea capable of penetrating "the fortified walls set by the United States, Europe, and shattering their social and economic systems."

The daily said the rash encounter of the West with Iran in relation with Salman Rushdie marks "the start of a cultural crusade against the Islamic Republic." It went on to say that the Westerners erroneously think that because people in this part of the world somehow still economically rely on the West, so the cutting of the means of their livelihood would eventually bring about their submission in an ideological war with the West.

It recommended self-reliance and a firmer resistance against the West in the present circumstances which it said is crucial to the ultimate triumph of Islamic ideology over communism and capitalism.

On Feb. 14, the leader of the Islamic revolution, Imam Khomeyni, decreed that Indian-born British novelist Salman Rushdie now hiding in Britain should be executed for his infamous reference to Islam. "The Satanic Verses" has infuriated Muslims in other parts of the world and caused protest demonstrations in India and Pakistan last week claiming 30 martyrs and more injuries in confrontations with police.

Brazilian Charge Summoned Over Khomeyni Edict

LD2502214189 Tehran IRNA in English 1820 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 25, IRNA—Brazilian Charge d'Affaires Antonio Vereza was summoned to the Foreign Ministry today and delivered a strongly worded protest for Brazil's stance against Imam Khomeyni's fatwah.

Brazil last week announced that the Portuguese version of the fatwah, which sanctions death penalty for apostate Salman Rushdie author of "The Satanic Verses" is "intervention in the internal affairs of Brazil."

Foreign Ministry Director General for American Affairs Nasrollah Kamyab [name as received] told Vereza that Brazil's stance is not only against the Islamic Republic of Iran, but also against one billion world Muslims.

The stance has placed Brazil alongside colonialist countries like the U.S. and Britain, Kamyab regretted.

Ayatollah Montazeri Sends Message To Khomeyni

LD2502142589 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 25 Feb 89

['Text' of Grand Ayatollah Montazeri's message addressed to Imam Khomeyni]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. To the blessed presence of Grand Ayatollah Imam Khomeyni—may your shadow lengthen. Greetings. Your message blew a new spirit in the body of the nation and the clergy—your important message addressed to the 'ulema, the sources of emulation, the learned men, the students and the teachers, and the Friday prayer leaders—a message containing strong and solid topics encompassing various dimensions and having decisive and explicit tone in these sensitive conditions brought about by the enemies of Islam and the revolution. It is the best axis to draw the clergy as well as the officials of the regime and the revolution, both at home and abroad.

What needed to be said you raised by implicitly as well as explicitly in your message. You referred to and analyzed the cultural conditions and ways of thinking prior to the revolution's victory, at the time of monarchical tyranny, when pressures were placed on the struggling and revolutionary wing by those who opposed the revolution and who engaged in plots and cooperation with the United States and agents of the shah. [passage omitted]

In your message Your Excellency stressed an important and basic point: that when the revolution is in the hands of the original owners of the revolution who have tasted the bitterness of struggle and prison and torture and destitution, then that revolution will never deviate from its path. Opportunists, seekers of comfort, the indifferent people of the past, and pseudo-revolutionaries of today who come to reap rewards never appreciate the value of the revolution because they have not had any part in the revolution and only want to reap the fruits of the revolution. It is quite possible for them to pretend to be revolutionaries in order to infiltrate the sacred revolutionary institutions to undermine it from within. They may well be intent on taking revenge against yesterday's revolutionaries, those who sacrificed themselves for the leadership and the revolution. [passage omitted]

In your message, Your Excellency has well portrayed the animosity of global arrogance to Islam and the revolution; you proved that the arrogant governments, in any shape or form, will never be trusted and must never be befriended. From them one must expect nothing but blows, poison, and plundering of our wealth, even though they come in the form of loans, assistance, and kindness. We must trust the Muslim and victimized nations, the deprived and dispossessed people of the world. We must strengthen the cultural relations of Islam and revolution with them.

Since the first days of the victory of the revolution, Your Excellency raised the slogans of "export of revolution", and "today Iran, tomorrow Palestine." Thus you attracted the hearts of the deprived and dispossessed people to the center of the revolution. These words were instrumental in motivating the peoples of Lebanon, Palestine, Afghanistan, and other regions. Thus, they exploded the mythical power of the superpowers.

It was in this connection, in an effort to bring to fruition your great objective, that I used to raise the point that we must not confine the spiritual and ideological horizon of the revolution and its leadershp within the limits of the regime and the government.

I would say that as our revolution depends on Islam and the clergy, it has not limits, no frontiers. I would say that we must make arrangements so that the world of Islam and all victimized and deprived peoples can in some way be connected to the center of this great movement—a movement which has disrupted the existing world balance. They should be helped with ideology and Islamic thought. Eventually, the revolution and leadership must be separated from the framework of the limited regulations of state and government [keshvar va dolat].

Your Excellency's powerful confrontation with the new plot of arrogance and global infidelity, which materialized in the form of the publication of the novel "The Satanic Verses" by an apostate mercenary, has once again revealed the true face of the colonialist governments and their despicable designs against Islam and Muslims. It also demonstrated the decisiveness and power of the leadership of Islam and the revolution. It also showed the power of the forces and nations which are faithful to Islam and its sanctities.

These colonial powers' governments, relying on their blind equations, believe the Iranian nation has lost the power to confront global infidelity after the pressures of the imposed war, the economic embargo, and missile attacks. But Your Excellency's powerful and decisive leadership, as well as the religious-political growth of our nation, proves that such colonial assumptions are wrong. [passage omitted]

Our dear nation and the revolutionary forces of Islam, who have so far endured many pressures and bitterness in defending Islam and the country, are ready to stand at their leader's side against the invading enemies of Islam, the Koran, and religious sanctities. God willing, they are ready to overcome the maverick enemy, whose only objective is to weaken Islam.

Here one wonders why the Arab governments who pretend to be Islamic have remained silent or have adopted the same position as that of global infidelity. It is also astounding why the arrogant governments and international organizations have defended an anti-God and antivalue element in this way, defending him in the name of human rights. And yet they ignore the religious feelings of 1 billion of the world's Muslims, as well as the barbaric attacks and slaughter of thousands of innocent people in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other regions.

In your message you pay specific attention to the Hezbollahi forces who have endured hardship. That was very well done. Everything we have stems from the blessing of this dear class, whether before the revolution or after, and in all scenes.

In my talks I have repeatedly expressed my anxiety about the difficulties and demands of the Hezbollahis. I have always stressed the need to keep them on the scene. I placed the limited resources of my own household at the disposal of this deserving class. I think that the country's executive organs, as far as possible, must be gradually placed at the disposal of committed and expert individuals from the ranks of these dear ones. These are the ones who, having tasted poverty and depravation, are capable of feeling the pain and suffering of the needy and those who appeal to us for help. Therefore, attend to their problems, without procrastination, bureaucracy, nepotism, and prejudice.

God willing, through your guidance and by your decree, various sectors throughout the country will be gradually brought under the control of such unknown, sincere, and selfless dear individuals. Of course, the leaders of the country and the majority of managers are comprised of the fighters and bereaved individuals, who give their all. However, the workloads and their intricacies do not tally with the small number of leaders, hence the need for help and advisers. If we are short of expert and knowledgeble forces we should be involved in training personnel for the future, and prepare expert forces for various sectors.

Regarding the sensitive role of the committed and revolutionary theologians of the seminaries, the guidelines set by your eminence, God willing, will be extremely beneficial and apt, and a source of blessings, especially in connection with the blooming of the religious teachings [fiqh] of the seminaries, with their 1000-year record, and with regard to the specific conditions of place and time, which brings about the exchange of ideas based on the book and the teachings of the great prophet and the rest of the infallible prophets—may God's blessing be upon them and their descendants—for various political, social, economic and judicial requirements.

If yesterday we considered ourselves powerless and unable to implement the Islamic decrees, now since the victory of the Islamic revolution—which rendered power into the hands of committed and revolutionary 'ulema—we can no longer to be excused in the eyes of God. The seminaries should equip themselves with the weapons of knowledge, and draw from today's knowledge along with religious teachings and practicing tenets. With the present links between the world of science and knowledge and the opening of the gates of universities and seminaries to other schools of philosophy, we have left behind the age of skepticism toward religious teachings, philosophy, and familiarizing ourselves with the science and literature of the day. In order to honor the enlightening philosophies of East and West, we have no choice other than to acquire knowledge of philosophy and other current sciences of today.

I hope that with this message the revolutionary forces will regain the vitality and energy of their early days of the revolution. If some have become despondent and indifferent, they may again become committed after Your Excellency's message, and combat problems and obstacles with faith, revolutionary zest, and strong willpower. I have been reminding the responsible brothers to do something to keep these revolutionary brothers, who have remained faithful to the revolution, on the scenes of combat and defense, as they were before. Our attitude should not include hurting the feelings of these brothers who gave up their lives and all their belongings for God and the revolution, otherwise the wealthy and trouble-free strata might take care of themselves under another system, by various means, without incurring any hardship.

Your Eminence aptly mentioned the danger of the mercenary and passive strata. Unfortunately, I must point out that today they have infiltrated some of our organizations and are playing an extensive role in running our affairs and implementing policies. As Your Eminence has been so explicit, you should graciously appoint a board comprised of the most combative and strong individuals, those who have sustained much suffering, who are not under the influence of any particular trend, and who will sincerely inspect the judicial, executive, and other organizations. They may then identify, encourage, and provide incentives for the good and faithful individuals belonging to the Party of God, as well as scrutinize the mercenary and opportunistic individuals, so as to at least prevent them from their obstructionism and their causing disaffection.

They should also be a point of refuge for those who may have been wronged, or harbor complaints relating to official organizations. Your Eminence's time and patience is not worthy of their petitions. This is an issue which under the Decree of the Ruling of Tyranny [velayat-e mazalem] was common practice in Islamic governments. Our great revolution, which resulted in victory through the coordination of the faithful strata of the nation and the decisive leadership of Your Eminence, is immune from within, or from military conspiracy, war, the hypocrites, economic sanctions, from the leaders of blasphemy and the Common Market, from pressures exerted by the superpowers and Zionists.

What might deliver blows at the revolution in the future is that those revolutionary people who have endured hardships, and who are faithful to the revolution, may gradually be driven away from the revolution due to incorrect and inappropriate methods, threats, accusations, and diverse charges. They may be replaced by noncombative and opportunistic people who never, and under no circumstances, are trustworthy. Their hands may be left open in dealing with the affairs of the country.

However, your awareness, strength, decisiveness, and guidance is a source of hope and confidence to all the revolutionaries and those who are attached to Your Eminence. This is why I have always emphasized the safeguarding of the spiritual position and the sanctity of the leadership. That is why I have always stressed that as far as possible people should not misuse your spiritual eminence for the sake of minor and executive affairs. On the contrary, in our system, the judicial, political, and executive organs should be so strong, solid, and harmonious that they can stand on their own under the general guidance and supervision of Your Eminence. They should be able to run the country and the revolution. Otherwise, our revolution will not be consolidated.

Of course, the country's esteemed leading officials from among the combative and hard-pressed members of society will not refrain from any efforts within their capability. However, the excessive amount of their work does not give them the opportunity to draw plans and administer all affairs, yet it is necessary that in important issues great use is made of committed experts. It is expected that arrangements have been made so that the contents of Your Eminence's messages, free from slogans, are in practice used as the guide for all officials. The maximum use is made of the guidelines of the leader—who is the greatest asset and the source of the unity of the nation—in order to run affairs and exclude any excesses.

Although I am busy with religious discussions in Qom, and although I play no part in the running of affairs, anytime I have had a recommendation or counsel or proposal, I have expressed them. The people and responsible officials in revolutionary organs and institutions discuss their problems and views with me daily—due to their familarity with me—although they know I do not interfere in the decision-making or the executive affairs of the country. They do so through letters or cables, or through general or private meetings. I also encourage responsible officials as much as possible, and at times I have brought their problems to the notice of the esteemed leader.

I beseech God Almighty for the strength and glory of Islam; for the defeat of the conspiracies of the enemies; for the victory of the fighters and the strugglers in the path of truth; and for the health and longevity of Your Eminence. God's peace and blessings be upon you. May God extend your shadow upon the heads of Muslims.

[Signed] Hoseyn 'Ali Montazeri

[Dated] 25 February 1989

Jannati Denounces Rushdie at Qom Prayers

NC2402195189 Tehran Television Service in Persian 1512 GMT 24 Feb 89

[Friday prayers sermon by Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, member of the Council of Guardians and acting Friday prayer leader, in Qom on 24 February—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] In these days, we see two very important issues. Although the Friday sermons do not permit us to examine even a tenth of these issues, I will try and speak as much as I can using the time available to me. One issue is the book which has caused an uproar all over the world, the writer of which is an atheistic, self-sold apostate, for whom neither religion, belief, nor the sentiments of 1 billion Muslim people are worth considering. Not even his own conduct or his own well-being seems important to him. Nothing entered his head, and so he wrote a book in which he has committed an act of audacity against the holy status of the prophethood. When this book was initially published—and I do not know why—there was no clamor and it was disseminated in a very limited area. In my opinion, if initially there was no political consideration in the writing of this book—which I personally do not believe, especially since this fellow is a member of the Royal Society of Literature of Great Britain, the work of which is usually politically motivated—it was later realized that this book can serve a useful political purpose and it was published all over the world.

Gradually the situation became such that it culminated in the edict by his holiness the imam, which has been approved by all Muslims. I do not think that you can find even one scholar in the world of Islam who will not concur that he [Rushdie] should be killed. He has not only referred to the prophethood and other sanctities with insults and total disregard but he is also an apostate, as it is not possible for one to be a Muslim and speak in such a way. There is much more to this issue. This is a fight against Islam. It is possible that one turns one's back on one's religion and says: I was a Muslim until now, but as of this day I wish to renounce Islam. This, whether one wishes to be a Muslim or an apostate, would then be a totally personal issue. One has the right to such a renunciation.

However, this is not the case. The fact is that someone, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, wants to challenge Islam, to fight against the prophet. This makes it a different matter. If he were not a Muslim, or even his parents had been Jews, communists, or idolaters, even then he would be similarly to blame. This is because if the imam says that he deserves to be killed and the publishers also should be killed, the question of whether the publishers are apostate or not does not arise. They are not Muslims, but even if some of them were, they would not be considered Muslims.

The imam has decreed that the publishers should also be killed. This is because by publishing this book a front has been opened up against Islam, to confront Islam and the very basis of this sacred religion. Therefore, this makes the issue far stronger than the two considerations mentioned earlier, and killing him is imperative. Anyone who is killed in doing this is a martyr. Even if certain conditions applicable to the killing of an apostate may not be present, as some people have mentioned in publications, it would be binding. Therefore, the publishers are in the same category as the writer.

It is rather strange that the enemy calculated and made such a move as opening a front on the literary level, thinking that these people [Iranians] have no pretensions to culture—shame on such culture. They published this book, disseminated it, publicized it, and distributed it everywhere. It was beyond their expectations and imaginations that anyone could stand up to them in such a manner and that the imam would take such a powerful stance on this issue. They just could not believe it.

When they encountered this situation, their reaction was ugly, low, and stupid. They held an EEC session on what to do next. They raised a great outcry, claiming that freedom of expression has been violated, freedom is being trampled upon, and terrorism is being propagated. [passage omitted]

You are sitting together after recalling your envoys so that you can contemplate embargoes and sanctions and impose economic boycotts and such things. I do not know how they think. It betrays a special kind of policy, which is very strong and links Europe and the United States in the writing and publication of this book. They are consistently following this policy everywhere. It seems human rights are being violated only in this instance. Are there no instances elsewhere that you could take a stance against? Iraq came and dropped chemical bombs on defenseless civilians. If they had dropped them on soldiers it would have been bad enough, it would have been a war crime; but Iraq dropped these bombs on its own people, old and young, men and women, who were destroyed by chemical bombs.

They were Iraqi citizens. Was this not a violation of human rights? You did not say one word—or recall any of your envoys. Why did you not say that you would sever relations? Not one of you even mentioned it, much less did anything about it. You did not convene any sessions or speak of imposing embargoes. O EEC leaders! Please speak up on this! Which was the more imortant issue, that or this? Here they wish to kill one man whose crime is great; he is a criminal. You are creating such furor. There, thousands were killed in that manner or rendered homeless. [passage omitted]

Were not human rights violated in Pakistan and Afghanistan? How did the Soviet Union go and occupy Afghanistan? The Afghan people's rights to decide their own policy and destiny were taken away from them. Was it not their right? Why did no one say: Let us sever relations with the Soviet Union? Why did no one say anything about recalling envoys from the Soviet Union?

They are killing so many people in the occupied lands, people whose last resort is to hurl stones. [passage omitted] Not one of you said: Let us sever relations with Israel. When some UN members decided to condemn this act, another vetoed the decision and declared the issue closed. [chanting]

In the United States, the blacks are not being given their rights. Are not their rights being infringed upon? Are they given any human rights? Why does no one say anything about this? Human rights have been violated in Europe for the past few centuries; did anyone speak of severance of relations, embargoes, and so on? Now, one person has committed a crime against Islam—the greatest since the advent of Islam until the present day All the Muslims agree on this and seek retribution, and you raise this clamor. Do you think we will go back on our word? You have not undestood our imam or our people. You imposed embargoes during the war. How is it that we did not raise our hands in surrender? [passage omitted]

Salman Rushdie deserves to be killed. The Muslim people will never leave him alone. The publishers will be killed, rest assured. If one old woman of ours has access to even one of them, she will kill that person, even if she is killed herself. That is how it should be. [cheers] [passage omitted]

I would now like to state that I am amazed at the greatness of the imam, who is standing steadfast as a rock to break these approaching waves which are endangering the revolution. Various waves have arisen lately, one of which was the book "The Satanic Verses." There were also some internal waves, which he sensed. He realized that it was necessary to uphold the rights of the scholars, the 'ulema, because if there were any uncertainty, it would be blamed on them and the clergy. This would make the people distrustful of the clergy. This is the crux of the matter, that if the clergymen, the pioneers of the revolution, were mistrusted or looked upon with suspicion, nothing would be left. The imam considered it necessary to dispel any such accusations and to prove that, whenever in hisory there has been a noble, just revolution, with deep roots, in the world of Islam the pioneers have always been the clerics of Islam, the same people who live a spartan life, are persecuted by tyrants, and comprise the most oppressed stratum of people. [passage omitted]

A proper whetstone or criterion for whether something is right or not is this: To what extent would it please the enemy? If we see that we have said something, even with good intentions, which the enemy is adding wings and feathers to and embellishing, we should realize that we should refrain from such utterances. If there are problems, we should tackle them in other ways. We must not provide grist for the enemy's propaganda mills. This was one of the things the imam very subtly protested against.

Another issue was more important was that of the pseudo-clerics and those who had donned a false garb of piety. For a long time, the imam had been aware of this and had hinted at this issue in various ways. In the latest message, the imam elaborated on this issue more clearly and openly than he had done before. For the truly noble, revolutionary, and dedicated scholars of Islam who are faithful to the revolution, this issue is worth pondering and studying with care, and they should tackle it with vigilance. We know there are many such persons, some well known and others anonymous, who in various ways raised objections and spread venom and harmful propaganda.

They misinterpreted every issue that arose. They were the ones who were not on the scene and had not tasted the bitterness of the revolution, nor the tribulations of the war. They had not joined the ranks of poor, oppressed people who have endured great hardships for victory, for the continuation of the revolution. They have not been at the people's side nor tasted the bitterness with them. Now, as always, they pretend to be concerned and make inappropriate remarks, such as what is lawful is being termed unlawful and vice versa, as if the highest Islamic authority is not entitled to issue a religious ruling. It is really strange. [passage omitted]

The imam sensed that this issue was greaer than the dangers posed by the foreign enemies who attacked us on 15 Khordad [5 June], and later, and committed crimes against us. The issue is whether people who have offered so many sacrifices, endured so much hardship, and nurtured this revolution with their lives, should become the object of criticism and doubt. [passage omitted]

Shevardnadze Continues To Meet With Leaders

Political, Cultural Agreements

LD2702163289 Tehran Television Service in Persian 1600 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] During the second round of talks between the Iranian and USSR foreign affairs ministers this evening two important political and cultural agreements were signed. After the singing of these two agreements, Foreign Minister Velayati said: The agreements are about the two countries' future political and cultural relations and an exchange of Iranian and Soviet delegations, which will take place regularly from this date.

Contacts To Include 'New Areas'

LD2702183289 Tehran IRNA in English 1705 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 27 IRNA—Political and cultural agreements were concluded Monday between the Islamic Republic and the Soviet Union whose foreign minister is on a highly successful visit here. The agreements were inked by Foreign Minister Dr 'Ali Akbar Velayati and his Soviet counterpart Eduard Shevardnadze.

Dr Velayati said the political agreement dealt with future political ties with Moscow and the exchange of delegates on a more regular basis. The cultural agreement was the result of months of discussion between Iranian and Soviet Foreign Ministry experts, he added.

On Shevardnadze's visit representing Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, he said the visit was a "turning point" in bilateral relations.

The Soviet minister was given the honor to be the first senior official of any country to personally address the Imam at his north Tehran residence Sunday.

After the signing ceremony Monday, Shevardnadze said political contacts will be enhanced between the two countries according to the agreements "and will include new areas." He did not elaborate. "The inking of the notes proves the existence of new horizons in political ties between Tehran and Moscow," he said.

His visit to Tehran was a good opportunity to study prospects for bilateral cooperation in the interest of the two countries.

Shevardnadze arrived here at the head of a ranking political and economic delegation on Saturday.

Holds Talks With Velayati

LD2702174989 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Messrs Velayati and Shevardnadze, the foreign ministers of the Islamic Republic of Iran [IRI] and the Soviet Union, held a 2-hour private discussion this morning. They discussed issues of mutual interest and the regional situation.

This afternoon they held their third round of talks. In this round of talks, first the chiefs of the Afghanistan committee and the (?committee) on Resolution 598 presented a report on the progress and the degree of understanding achieved. [sentenced as heard] The Soviet side emphasized its interest in seeing that the disputes between Iran and Iraq come to an end as soon as possible because this will be in the interest of both countries and the region in general. They said they were ready to assist in any way in order to attain peace.

The Iranian side viewed as positive Soviet efforts aimed at strengthening the UN secretary general's position on the prompt and full implementation of Resolution 598. While describing the talks, the Iranian side attributed the reason for lack of tangible results in the negotiations to Iraqi obstructionism. The Iranian side further emphasized: We are pursuing peace and security in the region. For this reason we stress the full implementation of the resolution. We have had the full cooperation of the UN secretary general on this issue.

On the issue of Afghanistan—which has entered a new phase in its history—the Iranian side expressed the IRI's satisfaction with the complete withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, and declared that the fate of the Afghan Government must be decided by the Muslims of that country. We must make efforts to assist that country in its reconstruction, as well as preventing foreign intervention in the affairs of that country.

The Soviet side put forward a proposal concerning a meeting of Afghanistan's neighbors. It was decided that the Iranian side will look carefully into that proposal.

The foreign ministers of the two countries approved the performance of their two committees and suggested the continuation of negotiations in an active and serious manner.

The negotiations concluded with discussions of regional issues and the situation in the Persian Gulf, particularly the presence of foreign forces in the Persian Gulf.

Majlis Speaker on Improved Ties

LD2702200589 Tehran IRNA in English 1845 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 27, IRNA—Majlis Speaker Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani accepted that relations between Iran and the Soviet Union had been significantly improved with the visit of Moscow's Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

Imam Khomeyni's message to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and the latter's reply delivered by Shevardnadze "is considered a turning point in the two countries' relations," he said.

The speaker made the remarks in a meeting with Shevardnadze who ended his three-day visit Monday evening.

"The most important event of my visit has been the meeting with his excellency, the imam," Shevardnadze said. The Soviet Union fully understood the importance of the meeting which was the first granted to a senior foreign official, he added. "We believe relations between Iran and the Soviet Union has been substantially transformed," he said.

Earlier the two countries signed political and cultural agreements for greater political and cultural exchanges and contacts.

The Soviet Foreign minister arrived Saturday after a 10-day tour of the Middle East to boost Moscow's relations with regional states.

Shevardnadze renewed an invitation for Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemi-Rafsanjani to visit Moscow. Hashemi-Rafsanjani accepted and said the visit would take place after coordination with the Foreign Ministry, at the appropriate time.

The Iraqi war and military intervention in Afghanistan were no longer obstacles in the way of expanding relations, the speaker said.

On Shevardnadze's remark that Moscow wanted the people of Afghanistan to rule their country without foreign intervention, Hashemi-Rafsanjani said Iran also did not accept foreign meddling in Afghanistan's internal affairs. "We do not want to interfere either," he said.

But referring to the presence of foreign navies in the Persian Gulf region, including that of the Soviet Union, he said Iran "would not tolerate" foreign warships in the region and believed that it had the capability to provide necessary security.

Shevardnadze said Moscow's policy was based on the withdrawal of foreign navies from the region and if there was a need for an outside naval presence, it should be under U.N. control.

In a meeting with President 'Ali Khamene'i, the Soviet official called for the withdrawal of the U.S. Navy from the Persian Gulf.

Concludes Visit, Leaves Tehran

LD2702205589 Tehran IRNA in English 2050 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 27, IRNA—Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze wound up a three day official visit to Tehran, and lef there this evening.

Two agreements in political and cultural areas were signed between Shevardnadze and his Iranian counterpart 'Ali Akbar Velayati, here this evening.

The two foreign ministers held three rounds of talks. They met for two hours privately Monday morning and exchanged views on mutual ties as well as regional issues. A third round of talks was held Monday afternoon. In these meetings, the U.N. Security Council Resolution 598 and the Afghan issues were also discussed.

Paper Views 'Promising' Ties With Moscow

LD2502122789 Tehran IRNA in English 1215 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 25, IRNA—The English daily KEYHAN INTERNATIONAL Saturday referred to Imam Khomeyni's historic message to Gorbachev (Jan. 7), the Soviet pull-out from Afghanistan and the expected arrival tonight in Tehran of the Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze as developments promising closer ties between Tehran and Moscow.

"The most important dimension of existing Tehran-Moscow ties can be clarified in events of the past few weeks but it will be much to the benefit of the two people if the Soviet leader does not fall victim to Western conspiracies," said the daily's editorial today.

According to KEYHAN INTERNATIONAL, "Kremlin's unlimited military support for the Iraqi regime during its eight-year-old war against Iran has caused very deep cracks in bilateral ties."

Referring to the non-aligned policy of Iran, the editorial believes that "there is a wide scope for Iran and the Soviet Union to cooperate on the regional and international scene."

The daily further reminds that the Soviet Union enjoyed a decade of full diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic but notes that they have "not taken any major step to promote understanding and create good will between the two peoples." The daily, however, voices confidence that the leaders in Kremlin "will improve their standing in the framework of healthy bilateral relations."

"In view of the fact that the Soviet Union has a strong Muslim minority, Iran's Islamic influence in a growing number of Muslim and non-Muslim states could well be a unique factor in bringing Tehran-Moscow stances closer," believes KEYHAN.

Soviet Reportage on Visit of Shevardnadze

For further reportage on the visit of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze to Iraq and Iran, including his meetings with the leaders of Iraq and Iran, see the Near East & South Asia section of the 24 February Soviet Union DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Karachi-Bound Plane Returns After Bomb Threat

LD2802092889 Tehran IRNA in English 0908 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 28, IRNA—An Iran Air Boeing 747 with 216 passengers on board destined for Karachi had to return to Tehran Tuesday morning to land at Mehrabad International Airport after an anonymous caller told Tehran communication center that a bomb had been planted in the plane.

Passengers were immediately evacuated but (until 11.45 local time, 08:15 GMT) no suspicious article had been found in the plane.

The Flight No. 812 which took off from Mehrabad Airport at 10:10 local time (06:40 GMT) was 15 minutes into its flight when it received instructions from the airport to return. It was to fly to Karachi and Bombay. The passengers are to fly with another plane this afternoon.

Khamene'i Returns From Yugoslavia, Romania

LD2502164489 Tehran Television Service in Persian 1600 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] President Khamene'i returned to Tehran this afternoon following an official 6-day trip to the SFRY and Romania. Our correspondent reports:

[Unidentified correspondent] President Khamene'i, who had gone to Yugoslavia and Romania at the head of a diplomatic-economic delegation, left Bucharest airport at 1210 Tehran time today. He was seen off by Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu. He arrived in Tehran at 1530.

On his return to the country, the president was welcomed by Prime Minister Musavi, a number of cabinet ministers and Majlis deputies, and civil and military officials.

Interviewed on E. Europe Trip

LD2502213589 Tehran Television Service in Persian 1600 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Excerpts] On his return to Tehran today, President Khamene'i described the outcome of his trip to Yugoslavia and Romania in an interview with our correspondent. We now draw your attention to that interview.

[Begin Khamene'i recording] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Our trip took a total of 6 days, 3 of which were spent in Yugoslavia and the rest in Romania.

In Yugoslavia we held two types of meetings: official meetings, which included holding talks with high-ranking officials of that country, and private meetings with the Yugoslav president, during which issues of interest to both sides were discussed. There were also two rounds of talks between the two delegations, during which various issues were discussed. We also established committees to follow up issues of mutual interest between meetings and gave them a practical aspect. In fact, during the second meeting we summarized the task of the committees. [words indistinct] on that basis an agreement was prepared and signed. [passage omitted] On the whole, as I have said, the talks resulted in the signing of a comprehensive agreement. [passage omitted]

In Romania we held lengthy talks with officials. I visited a large exhibition of military equipment. My talks with Mr Ceausescu were extremely fruitful; I had about four private meetings with him and we discussed a wide range of issues. We both concluded that there is a strong possibility for future cooperation between Iran and Romania. Moreover, the Iranian and Romanian delegations held two rounds of talks. [words indistinct] a comprehensive agreement, prepared by the ministers of foreign affairs and planning of the two countries was signed.

As for my overall impression of this trip, I can tell our country's dear people that I believe cooperation with those two countries can be a very good starting point for the Islamic Republic's reconstruction effort in the various economic and technical fields. Of course, we talked extensively about political issues during our discussions. We also discussed scientific and cultural issues. We reached agreements in every field. Concerning the Nonaligned Movement, we reached interesting agreements with Yugoslavia. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Briefs Khomeyni on Trip

LD2602173589 Tehran Television Service in Persian 1600 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] Imam Khomeyni, the leader of the Islamic revolution, this morning received President Khamene'i, who has returned from a visit to Yugoslavia and Romania. The president presented a report to the imam of the ummah on his trip.

Finance Minister Returns From Yugoslavia

NC2402072189 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 24 Feb 89

[Text] Mr Iravani, minister of economic affairs and finance, who had gone to Yugoslavia together with President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, returned to Tehran this morning.

During the visit, Mr Iravani met with the ministers of finance and of foreign trade of Yugoslavia. During these meetings, the memorandum of understanding signed at the seventh session of the joint committee that met in Belgrade in Mehr [month ending 22 October] was studied, and the need for creating the necessary grounds for its implementation, as well as the implementation of the industrial and technical memoranda of understanding signed during this session, was stressed. The two sides agreed to extend the facilities necessary to implement some development projects in Iran, to increase the supply of items needed by the Islamic Republic of Iran, to increase Yugoslavia's purchases of Iranian oil from 1 million to 1.5 million tonnes annually, and to export Yugoslav staple goods, such as meat, rice, and corn, to Iran.

During these meetings, issues pertaining to Iran's nonoil exports to Yugoslavia were studied. In this respect, the Yugoslavia side expressed its readiness to purchase more Iranian nonoil products. During these talks, it was agreed that Iran would purchase various types of paper from Yugoslavia. Agreement was also reached on setting up a plant to manufacture recycled newspapers by using Iran's domestic potentials.

Cabinet Thanks Khomeyni for Anniversary Message

LD2602175589 Tehran Television Service in Persian 1600 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Excerpts] The cabinet, in a message to the imam of the ummah, thanked the leader of the revolution for his historic message addressed to Muslim clergy. The message in part says your historic and revolutionary message, dear father and sympathetic mentor of the ummah, was the many-fold good tidings of the revolution's rebirth. Your children in the cabinet thank their wise leader from the bottom of their hearts. [passage omitted]

The message, referring to the pure Muhammadan Islam as a lifegiving elixir, has stressed: We do not need a lantern because we have a sun like Khomeyni to guide us. It was the liberals who resented the rising of this sun, for it deprived them from showing off their lanterns. Of course, they still exist. They have been waiting for 10 years, hoping that this sun might set. They will wait many more decades. They and the Westerners are waiting for us to suppress the revolutionary fervor of our nation so that they can give us an assembly factory in return. In return for several nuts and bolts they expect to insult all our sanctities. May God save us from such a humiliating prospect.

In the conclusion of this message, the cabinet has pointed out: O great imam, your children are united as a single hand against the enemies of Islam. Westerners are consoling themselves that there are moderates and extremists in Iran. Perhaps their aim is to take away the nation's trust for the responsible officials. By following a leader like you, no one is slow and no one walks faster than his leader. Pure Muhammadan Islam is a phenomenon above the leftist or rightist political inclinations, but Westerners do not understand this. In the service of this pure religion, we beseech almighty God to grant us more success.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Afghan Leader Meet

LD2502204989 Tehran IRNA in English 1900 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 25, IRNA—Spokesman of the eight party coalition of Afghan Mujahidin Muhammad Karim Khalili briefed Majlis speaker on the latest political, military and international developments in Afghanistan.

Khalili in a meeting with Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani here today presented ideas for setting up an independent and popular Islamic government to replace the present regime in Kabul. He also appreciated Iranian support for the mojahidin during the eight-year-long Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

"Afghan mujahidin under the coalition command are ready to carry out Imam Khomeyni's fatwah against the author of the blasphemous novel, 'The Satanic Verses'," Khalili told Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

The speaker in reply proposed that all people and groups of Afghanistan should join hands to establish an Islamic and independent government in the Muslim country.

Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze arrived here this evening and is believed to discuss the Afghan issue in addition to Tehran-Moscow relations with Iranian leaders during his three-day stay here. He is also to hand a message form Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to Imam Khomeyni.

Algerian Envoy, Majlis Speaker Discuss Relations

LD2302115289 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 22 Feb 89

[Text] Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani received the Algerian ambassador in Tehran yesterday. According to the IRNA report, the Algerian ambassador emphasising the good relations existing between the two countries in the political and economic fields. The discussions concerned the two countries cooperation in the Islamic Conference Organization and the Nonaligned Movement. Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani, calling the latest developments in North Africa and the Arab Maghreb region positive, stressed the greater expansion and strengthening of ties between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Algeria.

Majlis Speaker Speaker Invited To Visit Hungary

LD1902173589 Tehran Television Service in Persian 1600 GMT 19 Feb 89

[Text] Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani, speaker of the Majlis, received the Hungarian People's Republic's ambassador to Tehran today.

According to the Majlis Public Relations Office, during this meeting the Hungarian ambassador delivered an official invitation from his country's president to Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani. Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani expressed his appreciation for the Hungarian president's invitation and said he hopes to be able to visit that country in the near future.

Velayati Receives Departing DPRK Envoy

LD1902134789 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 19 Feb 89

[Text] The DPRK ambassador was received today at the end of his mission by Minister of Foreign Affairs Velayati.

According to a Central News Unit report, during the meeting, he [the ambassador] expressed his support for the Islamic revolution and praised the Iranian nation's presence on the scenes of battles against the enemies. The DPRK ambassador remarked on the efforts made by the leader of his country to create unity and resolve the Korean issue in a peaceful manner. He also expressed hope for further expansion of bilateral ties.

At this meeting, Mr Velayati also supported the initiatives taken by the DPRK president and expressed hope that the unity between two Koreas will soon be established.

Velayati To Visit Bangladesh in April

LD1902121889 Tehran IRNA in English 1155 GMT 19 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 19, IRNA—Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati is to visit Dhaka in April at the invitation of his Bangladeshi counterpart Anisul Islam Mahmud.

A written invitation was handed to Velayati by Bangladesh Ambassador Reza ul-Karim here today.

Velayati described Mahmud's recent visit to Iran (in December) as successful and called for further efforts to expand Tehran-Dhaka ties.

Iraqi Deportees Welcomed at Western Border

LD2702133889 Tehran IRNA in English 1337 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text] Bakhtaran, Feb. 27, IRNA—The Baghdad regime has deported 150 more of its Muslim citizens over the past few days, despite its earlier announcement that all Iraqi refugees are free to return home.

The deportees, mainly women and children were welcomed by Iranian officials at a western border point after an arduous trek through rugged and snow-covered areas of northeastern Iraq.

Waves of Iraqi Muslims have been pouring into Iran since the Islamic revolution triumphed in 1979 and even throughout its almost eight year aggression the Ba'thist regime continued to arrest and expel committed Iraqi Muslims.

Currently Iran hosts an estimated half a million Iraqi Arabs in addition to around 40,000 Iraqi Kurds, while hundreds of thousands of other Iraqis are living in exile in Syria and Western Europe.

However, where the so-called Western interests are not at stake human rights forums seem to have no qualms over human sufferings even if whole towns are chemically slaughtered en masse.

Malekzadegan on Current Naval Operations

LD2602173989 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran's naval force has set off on a journey in the open waters and the ports belonging to friendly countries, with the aim of increasing the knowlege of the Navy cadets and providing training for combat units in connection with the operational programs.

Rear Admiral Malekzadegan, the commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran's naval force, referred to this point in an interview this morning, saying: The ships of the Islamic Republic's naval forces comprised of troop carriers, warships, and logistic and supply units, have begun their journey in two routes in the open waters. At the moment one of the units has anchored in the eastern section of the African Continent in the port of Dar es Salaam and the other units are in the process of navigation in the Indian Ocean, having gone through a long route of over 3600 nautical miles.

Rear Admiral Malekzadegan announced: The naval units participating in this long journey will continue their journey by changing their route toward the remaining ports in the region belonging to friendly countries. On visiting these ports, the naval force's personnel will engage in the exchange of scientific and cultural information, as well as navigational knowledge.

He reiterated: In respect to the 8 years of sacred defense and the continual presence of the intrepid naval forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran's naval forces who were engaged in defending the water borders and the deep blue waters of the Persian Gulf; the naval forces' units have hitherto managed to continue navigating in selected routes, independently, without any foreign help, and through their distinctive initiative.

In the conclusion of his interview, the commander of the naval force described that unit's journey in the open waters as indicative of the strength and combative capability of that unit in the region. He added: the Islamic Republic of Iran's naval force is ready to expand its capability in the region.

Paper on Formation of Arab Cooperation Council

LD1902190788 Tehran IRNA in English 1806 GMT 19 Feb 89

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 19, IRNA—The ganging up of Iraq, Jordan, Egypt and North Yemen in the shape of the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) means "factionalism in the Arab bloc," and a counter move to the (Persian) Gulf Cooperative Council and Iran's growing ties with Turkey and Pakistan, said a Persian daily today.

Commenting on the new axis, ETTELA'AT said that "the economic coating of the ACC is misleading and the fact is political, military and other issues" have forced these culturally diverse states to form an alliance against the (P)GCC, which groups Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE, Qatar and Oman.

The council also seeks to counter the Islamic Republic of Iran's diplomatic initiatives after its acceptance of U.N. Resolution 598 and the start of the reconstruction era, believed the daily.

The four-member alliance bids for a political, economic, military and diplomatic edge over Iran, Syria and (P)GCC, following Islamic Iran's expansion of ties with Persian Gulf states, Pakistan and Turkey, it added.

"Signs of a growing regional factionalism is evident in the Persian Gulf, southwestern Asia and the Arabian Peninsula of course with Washington's blessings," remarked the paper.

It thought that the purpose behind the ACC was an attempt to isolate Syria in the Arab world and stand against political, economic and military power of the Islamic Republic.

"We need political vigilance to counter this sinister plot," the daily suggested.

Hajjiabad District To Receive TV Programming

LD2102165289 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0730 GMT 21 Feb 89

[Text] The television transmitter in the Hajjiabad District in Bandar-e 'Abbas was commissioned. According to a Central News Unit report with the commissioning of this 10w transmitter, which will operate by way of the satellite system, the inhabitants of (?Sarked-e Ahmadi) region in Hajjiabad in Bandar-e 'Abbas and the nearby villages will, from now on, be able to receive the first television network programs for the first time on Channel 10.

Commentary on Need for More Efficient Taxation

NC2702121489 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Commentary prepared by the Central News Unit's research group]

[Excerpts] In the name of God. Late last week, the Majlis approved the high priority bill on taxes for national cooperation in reconstruction. Now that the arguments put forward on this topic by the Council of Guardians have been overcome, the bill may be implemented early next year [year beginning 21 March 1989] in parallel with the implementation of the country's new taxation law. [passage omitted]

One of the major sources of income for governments in the world today is taxes. In addition to their important role in financing expenditures, taxes can be an effective tool in the implementation of a government's financial policies. Through a taxation system, governments can draw up and implement many economic and social policies, such as policies to ensure social justice. [passage omitted]

In a healthy economy, the government's current budgets should be financed out of income from a just taxation system. The former regime prevented the establishment of this equilibrium. The non-use of income from taxes is actually tantamount to the use of national wealth instead of national income to meet expenditures. At present, in developed countries, the ratio of taxes to the gross national production is 27 to 30 percent. This ratio is between 12 and 18 percent in developing countries. In our country, however, it is only 7 to 8 percent. In other words, instead of using national income, we are using our national wealth in order to meet our expenditures.

Generally speaking, Iran's taxation system has always faced two problems: the absence of an effective law and problems of implementation. During the former regime, because of the corrupt economic system the question of taxes was accorded very low priority. Thus, there was neither an effective taxation law, nor a strong cadre for tax collection.

After the victory of the Islamic revolution and the economic developments stemming from it, taxation surfaced as an effective economic tool, and the volume of income from taxes increased daily. But this increase still fell far short of the country's potential taxation capability.

In 1366 [year beginning 21 March 1987], the ratio of the total of taxation and other incomes to current expenditures was 46 percent. A favorable ratio is between 60 and 70 percent. Ministry of Finance experts believe that the country's potential taxation capability is 2,300 billion rials—a sum that would meet all the current expenditures of the government. Presently, the taxes received by the country do not reach even 50 percent of this.

The country's taxation system after the victory of the Islamic revolution still faced the same two old problems; that is, the absence of a strong law and of effective implementation. Then the Islamic Republic's taxation bill was introduced, and after a long period of debate and discussion it was finally approved in Esfand 1366 [month beginning 20 February 1988], in 271 articles and 211 addenda. This law will be put into effect in 1368 [year beginning 21 March 1989]. Of course, any weak points in this law will have to be studied a few years after its implementation.

If a favorable income is to be received from taxes, the following elements are necessary: the existence of comprehensive laws, the existence of a trained cadre, a knowledge of income sources, the formation of a supervision system, measures to guarantee efficient tax collection, and the prevention of tax evasion. Experts believe that the country's taxation system currently faces personnel problems and a shortage of trained employees. Because of the problems of tax collection, in the period between shahriva 1359 and the end of 1365 [1980-86], about 7,000 billion rials of legal taxes remained uncollected in the private sector.

The inability to gain a favorable income from taxes itself adds to society's economic problems. While more than 50 percent of the gross national product is allocated to the services sector, the amount of taxes received from this sector is extremely low. [remainder of commentary unheard as station switches to international programming at this point]

Pakistan

Bhutto Says Rushdie Incident Should Be Contained

TA2502064889 Ankara Domestic Service in Turkish 0530 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Orhan Ertanhan report from Tokyo]

[Excerpts] Prime Minister Turgut Ozal met today with Shintaro Abe, secretary general of the Liberal Democratic Party, which is currently in power in Japan, as well as Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. [passage omitted]

In a statement following her meeting with Ozal, Bhutto said in reply to a question on the book "The Satanic Verses" that all the Islamic countries are very sensitive on this issue, and that these feelings should be taken into consideration. Recalling that lives were lost in Pakistan and India in protests caused by the book, she said that governments must be very careful in such situations. She said that the book was published before she became prime minister, adding that no incidents occurred in her country at that time. She noted that the publication of the book was banned in Pakistan. [Words indistinct], she pointed out that the incident should not be exaggerated. We must appease the feelings of people who have reacted strongly, she said. [passage omitted]

Customs Holds 4 Magazines Over Rushdie Issue

BK2702123089 Hong Kong AFP in English 1205 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Excerpt] Islamabad, Feb 27 (AFP)—The four main international magazines sold here have been stopped by customs authorities because of their coverage of the international furor over Salman Rushdie's novel "The Satanic Verses," sources said Monday.

The last issues of TIME, NEWSWEEK, ASIAWEEK and the FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW, which should have hit news stands here over the past four days, are still being held by officials in the southern port of Karachi, said the sources.

The Information Ministry confirmed that the issues of TIME and NEWSWEEK were "currently being studied" to see if their coverage of the Rushdie affair would warrant their being banned in Pakistan, where 100 million Muslims live.

Last week's issue of the British SUNDAY TIMES was banned because it published extracts of the Indian-born British author's novel, which Muslims have condemned as being blasphemous to Islam. [passage omitted]

Bhutto Praises Afghan 'Interim Government'

OW2602100689 Tokyo KYODO in English 1334 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] Tokyo, Feb. 25 KYODO—Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto praised the recent election of interim government leaders by the Afghan mujaheddin and asked for United Nations support in future repatriation of Afghan refugees in talks with the U.N. secretary general here Saturday.

The more than 440 delegates of the mujaheddin consultative body known as the shura, elected a moderate president and Islamic fundamentalist premier Thursday to head a proposed interim administration for the war-torn nation.

Bhutto told U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar that council members had "demonstrated unity" and would create proper conditions for the return of the refugees according to official spokesman Khalid Mohammad.

In earlier meetings the same day Bhutto met with Japanese business and parliamentary leaders who agreed there was great potential for advancing commercial ties between Japan and Pakistan. A visit by Japanese parliamentarians was also agreed on, the spokesman said.

Officials from Suzuki Motor Co., C. Itoh and Co. and Komatsu Ltd. called on the prime minister. The three companies have major investments in Pakistan.

Bhutto also met with Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal and Saudi Arabia's Prince Nawaf ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Sa'ud in her last round of funeral diplomacy before departure.

Returns From Japan

OW2702014789 Tokyo KYODO in English 2317 GMT 26 Feb 89

[Text] Islamabad, Feb. 27 KYODO—Pakistan's Prime Minister Benzir Bhutto said Sunday that the formation of a proposed interim government by Afghan guerrillas would pave the way for a political settlement of the Afghan issue.

She said it was premature, however, to recognize the government formed by the Afghan mujahidin, who are seeking to overthrow the government in Kabul.

She also told a press conference on her return from Tokyo, where she attended last Friday's funeral for Emperor Hirohito, that she held meetings with Japanese leaders and businessmen that would further strengthen friendly ties with a "fellow Asian country."

Fifth Economic Session With PRC Begins 25 Feb

BK2502160489 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] The fifth session of the Pakistan-China Joint Economic Commission began in Islamabad today. The prime minister's adviser for finance, V.A. Jafarey, headed the Pakistani delegation, while the Chinese side was led by Li Lanqing, the Chinese vice minister for foreign economic relations and trade. Three working committees were set up. The first committee will review all aspects of the economic assistance and power projects. The second working committee will look into matters relating to trade, industrial, and agricultural fields, while the third committee will review all aspects of the cooperation in cultural, educational, technical, and scientific research fields. The committees will submit their reports to the third and last session of the commission.

Session Ends 27 Feb

BK2702155989 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 29 Feb 89

[Text] Pakistan and China have agreed to widen the scope of bilateral cooperation in the economical, trade, educational, cultural, scientific and technical and other fields. This was stated at the end of a 3-day meeting of the Pakistan-China joint committee on economic, trade, scientific and technical cooperation in Islamabad today.

The committee noted that since its 4th session there have been satisfactory results in economic cooperation in the fields of contracted projects, labor service, and joint ventures. Both sides expressed hope that the agreements signed on encouragement and protection of investment during the Pakistan prime minister's recent visit to China will facilitate setting up joint ventures. Both sides agreed that concerned departments should work jointly and in close cooperation for completing the project relating to units number 2, 3 and 4 of the Jamshoro power plant. China agreed that the Chinese corporation would be asked to secure a contract from the Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Work under which some equipment will be produced locally for this project.

Both sides agreed that wide prospects exist for joint ventures on the basis of mutual trust and interest. They agreed to cooperate with each other for setting up joint ventures in third countries. Both sides, while expressing satisfaction at the substantial increase in Sino-Pakistan trade in 1988, noted that there still exists wide prospects to increase bilateral trade.

The committee at its meeting reviewed the progress made in the cultural, educational, scientific and technical fields and expressed satisfaction with it.

The committee's sixth session will be held in Beijing this year at a date to be fixed through mutual consultations.

PRC's General Chi Haotian Arrives in Rawalpindi

BK2802050289 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Text] General Chi Haotian, the chief of the General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, arrived in Rawalpindi last night on a 9-day visit to Pakistan. He was received at the airport by Admiral Iftikhar Ahmad Sirohey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff committee.

Sri Lanka

Sinhalese 'Butchered' by Tamil Guerrillas

BK2802061289 Hong Kong AFP in English 0602 GMT 28 Feb 89

[Excerpt] Colombo, Feb 28 (AFP)—Tamil guerrillas butchered 35 Sinhalese civilians in an overnight attack on a farming village in eastern Sri Lanka, military officials here said Tuesday [28 February].

Gunmen believed to be from the dominant Tamil separatist group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), raided Welikanda village in Polonnaruwa District as the victims were sleeping late Monday, officials said.

"The killers rampaged through the village dragging people out of bed and chopping them to death. As villagers raised cries, they opened fire and escaped," a senior military official here said.

He said the dead included nine children and four women. Five people, including a soldier, were wounded in the attack. Fourteen bodies were found late Monday and 21 more were recovered during a search by soldiers Tuesday, the official said.

A major hunt was underway in the area Tuesday for the killers, but the progress was necessarily slow because the militants had mined approach roads to the village bordering Tamil-populated Batticaloa District.

"We have sent hundreds of troops from two camps in the area. A soldier lost his leg when he stepped on a pressure mine," the official said, adding that the soldier had been flown to a hospital in neighbouring Anuradhapura District.

It was not immediately clear how many rebels took part in the attack, but officials said they suspected at least a "few dozen" were involved.

Officials here said State Minister for Irrigation H.G.P. Nelson was visiting the massacre site in an inquiry.

The latest LTTE attack was the fourth against Sinhalese in northern and eastern regions in February. Six were killed Thursday [23 February] in Anuradhapura and 36 on February 12. Eleven people were butchered on February 3. In October LTTE activists killed 45 farmers in North Central Province. [passage omitted]

Muslim Group Endorses 'Sentence' on Rushdie

BK2502113089 Hong Kong AFP in English 1045 GMT 25 Feb 89

[Text] Colombo, Feb 25 (AFP)—A Moslem political party in Sri Lanka has supported Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni's call for the death of author Salman Rushdie and accused the western media of seeking to justify his novel "The Satanic Verses."

"The condemnation and extermination of Rushdie may not be criticised or questioned," the Sri Lanka Moslem Congress (SLMC) said in a statement Friday.

The book has been banned in Sri Lanka, where Moslems constitute 7.6 percent of the island's 16 million population.

Calling Mr Rushdie's book "blasphemous and insulting to the word of Allah," the statement alleged that the author's motive was to achieve "cheap publicity by arousing natural controversy."

It accused the western media of seeking to justify Mr Rushdie's actions and said: "The SLMC believes there is totally unscrupulous use of the media which has thereby adversely affected the Islamic point of view."

Northeastern Council Chief on Indian Troops

BK2702042889 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 27 Feb 89

[Text]The chief minister of the Northeastern Province of Sri Lanka, Mr Varadaraja Perumal, has urged President Premadasa to implement immediately the regulations on the maximum devolution of powers to provincial councils. Speaking to newsmen in Colombo, he said urgent concrete steps should be taken to help rehabilitate about 3 lakh refugees in the northeast. Referring to the security arrangements of the province, the chief minister said a citizen's volunteer force of 7,000 members is being recruited in addition to a 6,000 strong police force.

About withdrawal of the Peacekeeping Force [PKF], he said necessary conditions will have to be created before considering any talks of the withdrawal. He said the PKF came to Sri Lanka to implement the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement and not just to disarm the militants.

Mr Perumal said the strength of the LTTE is diminishing and they have no option left but to join the democratic process.

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